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JOHN HOOD: An Agenda for the Suburbs

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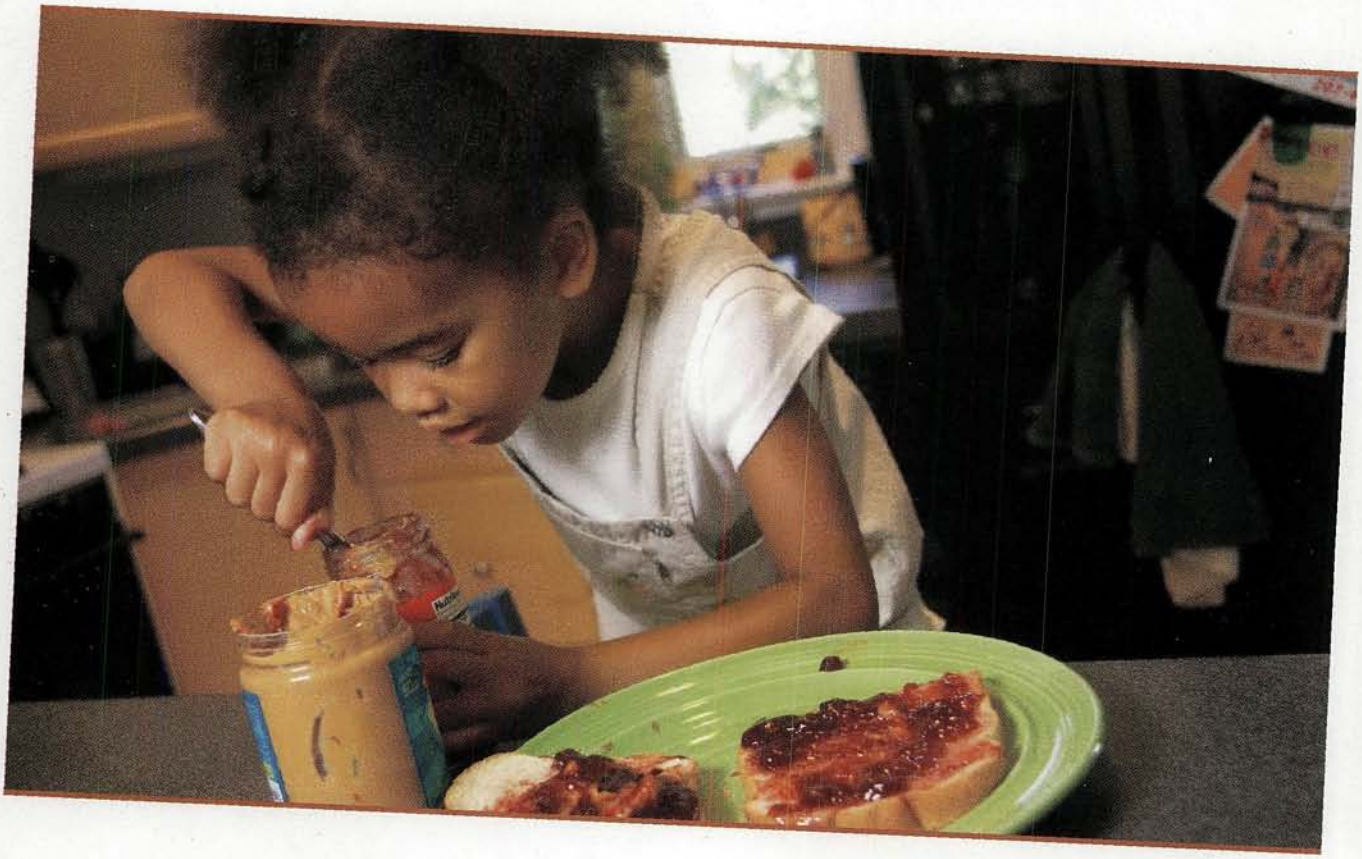

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JANUARY 29, 2007 VOL. LIX, NO. 1

NATIONAL REVIEW

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■ ON THE COVER

Do or Die in Iraq

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The streets outside the Green Zone are controlled by killers whose souls have been corroded, and who will continue to murder, because that's what they do. They're not going to be won over by jobs cleaning streets or promises of oil-revenue sharing. Like the mafia, they have tasted power and they're not giving it back. They have to be put down, in jail or in the earth. *By Bing West*

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Ramesh Ponnuru / David Pryce-Jones
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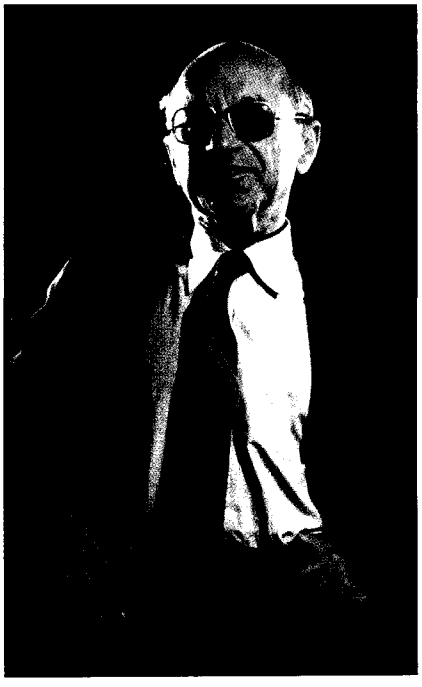
letters to the editor

ASK NOT . . .

Rather than dissect the diehard Libertarian party's effect on tax increases (The Week, Dec. 18), it might be more fruitful to ask what Republicans have done lately for economic conservatives and the cause of lower taxes. From pork-barrel spending to weakness before eminent-domain abuse to "compassionate conservatism," the current crop of Republicans has offered one insult after another. The question to ponder isn't so much why the Libertarian party won't die, but why the Republicans have been indifferent to those most likely to leave them.

Prof. Mitchell Langbert
Brooklyn, N.Y.



KEYNES WINS?

Early in his tribute to Milton Friedman ("Economist on a White Horse," Dec. 18), John O'Sullivan writes: "Indeed, in a development that would have delighted a Gibbon or an Evelyn Waugh, Richard Nixon declared that 'we are all Keynesians now' at the very moment when the Age of Keynes, Friedman's great theoretical antagonist, was drawing visibly to its close."

But Nixon was not expressing a philosophical preference. He made the assertion after he had "closed the gold window" to foreigners seeking to redeem dollars, and was alluding to the fact that every currency in the world was thenceforth a fiat currency. This had been Keynes's main objective, and 35 years later it is still the case.

In fact, Keynes has triumphed, and Mr. O'Sullivan along with the rest of us is also a Keynesian—whether he likes it or not. The Age of Keynes is far from closed.

John Lee Carroll
New York, N.Y.

FOR THE DEFENSE

There was very little productive in Mr. Buckley's column of December 12 ("Any Kind Words for Pinochet?"). There is not a "special awkwardness" in the matter of Gen. Augusto Pinochet. Simply stated, if he had not taken action in 1973, Chile today would be something like a Cuba or Poland on the Pacific, or maybe a Chile on the Pacific, but one without commerce and industry—in other words, like the rest of South America. Instead, because of General Pinochet, Chile is an economic marvel and the envy of the continent.

Mr. Buckley is correct in stating that now they may well tackle his subordinates. The people are free to do this because—well, because of Pinochet himself. Years ago, when the voters asked him to do so, he and his power structure stepped aside.

Richard Jorandby
Jupiter, Fla.

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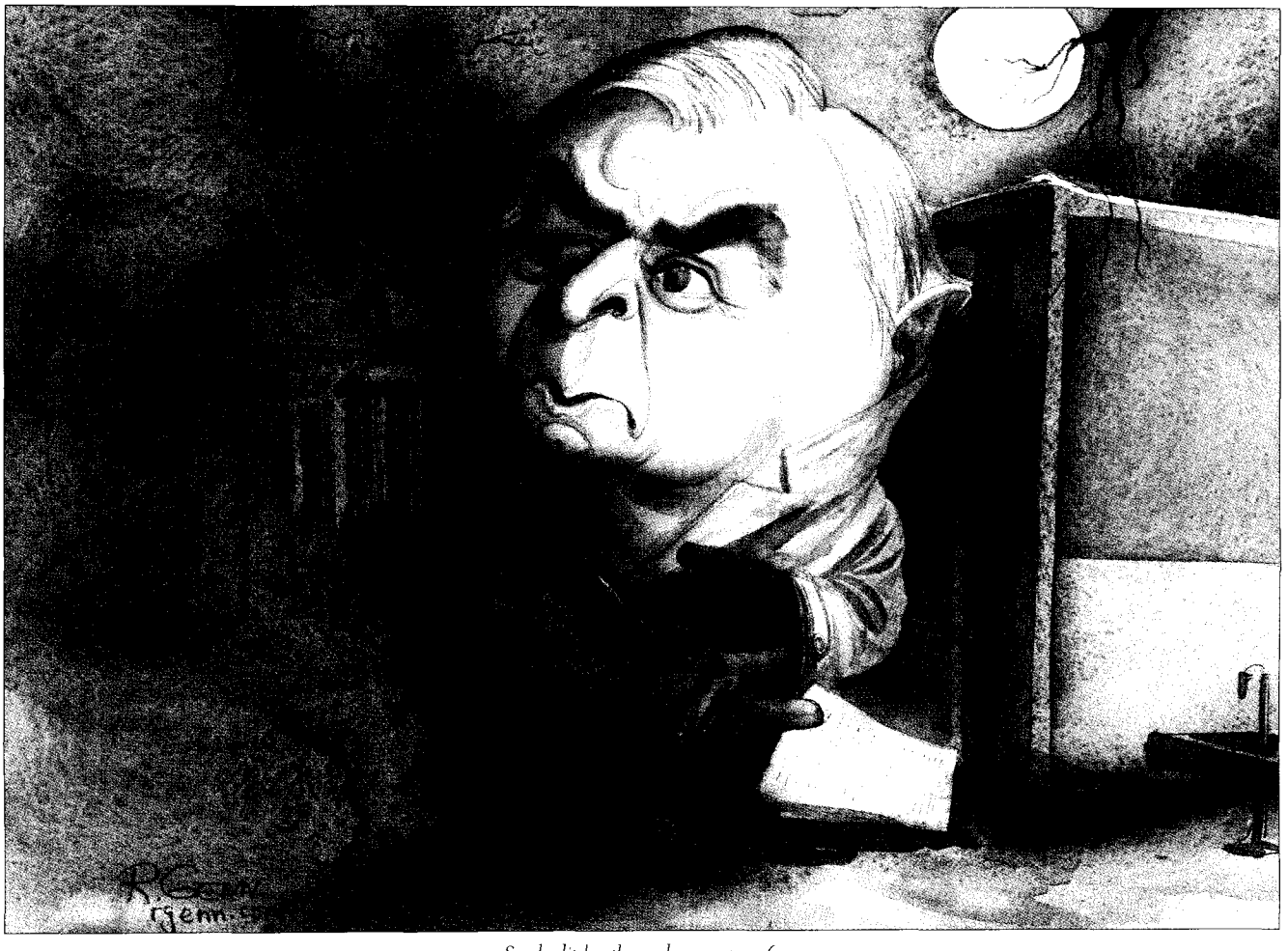
THE WEEK



Sandy ditches the goods—see page 6.

■ Wouldn't it be nice if the media loved Republican presidents even when they were alive?

■ Did we need reminding of Saddam's nature? Apparently so. The moment the cellphone video of his rowdy hanging hit the Internet, hands wrung over Iraqi incompetence, Sunni reaction, etc., etc. Ten days after his death, Saddam spoke from beyond the grave, and John F. Burns of the *New York Times* heard him. Recordings of high-level planning sessions during the Saddam years—like other strongmen, he had a mania for detail—were played at the trial of his remaining co-defendants, and on them Saddam matter-of-factly discusses chemical attacks on Kurds. "They're very effective if people don't wear masks." "You mean they will kill thousands?" a yes-man asks. "Yes, they will kill thousands," Saddam replies. "In the history of prosecutions against some of the last century's grimmest men," writes Burns, "there can rarely have been a moment that so starkly caught a despot's unpitying nature." And what other grim man was brought to justice by his own society? Hitler committed suicide, Mussolini and Ceausescu were lynched, the Nuremberg defendants were tried by the victors, Stalin and Mao died in their beds, as will Castro. The jeering at Saddam's end was unseemly, one small symbol of the hatreds that are tearing Iraq apart. But an Iraqi court, openly giving the quietus to an Iraqi nightmare, was a large symbol of a better possibility, in Iraq and elsewhere. *Sic semper tyrannis.*

■ From New Orleans, surrounded by the ravages of Hurricane Katrina, former senator John Edwards launched a campaign to fight against global warming and poverty and for universal health care and higher taxes on the rich. The fight in Iraq he wants no part of, having declared his regret for voting to authorize it. Edwards never left the campaign trail after John Kerry's and his defeat and tops some preference polls in key states, but the fresh face of 2004 could face a fresher face if Sen. Barack Obama joins the nomination race. Should this sole southerner in

ROMAN GENN

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Like a picked flower cut from the source, we gradually wilt physically and mentally and become vulnerable to a host of degenerative diseases, that we simply weren't susceptible to in our early adult years.

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Many in hollywood's glamour sets, who never seem to age like you or I, have a special secret to tell, and even space pioneer and US Senator John Glen stays vital with HGH.

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THE WEEK...

the field prove more experienced than Obama, and more appealing than Hillary Clinton, Republicans can look forward to explaining why neither of his "two Americas" should want a trial lawyer in the White House.

■ Let's get this clear right away: Democrats and their allies on the left have a deep, deep respect for the need to protect classified information. We learned that during the CIA leak investigation, when they accused the White House of blowing the classified status of CIA employee Valerie Plame Wilson, and then cheered as prosecutor Patrick Fitzgerald dragged top aides before a grand jury time after time. But that was then. Now they are oddly silent about the deeds of Samuel Berger, one-time Clinton national security adviser and top foreign-policy aide to presidential candidate John Kerry. We've known for a couple of years that Berger sneaked highly classified Clinton-era documents out of the National Archives when he was vetting them for the September 11 Commission. But he claimed it was all inadvertent, an unfortunate accident. Now we know better. A new report from the archives' inspector general describes how Berger stashed the documents in his pockets, left the archives building, headed toward a nearby construction area, looked around to see if the coast was clear, and then stashed them under a trailer, where he would later pick them up, take them to his office, and destroy them. The documents Berger was taking were copies of an after-action report on the Millennium terrorist threats—a report that was critical of the Clinton administration's handling of the matter. Berger has never fully explained what he was doing, and you can be sure he never will, since the Bush Justice Department let him off easy with a plea deal for a $50,000 fine and 100 hours of community service. The whole episode is a travesty, especially in light of a recently released report by House Republicans showing that Berger's actions compromised not only the information provided to the 9/11 Commission but national security as well.

■ The new Democratic Congress prepared to vote on a bill to fund stem-cell research that kills human embryos. But science may be mooting the debate. According to the advocates of funding, embryonic stem cells have more promise than adult stem cells because they are "pluripotent": They can become any number of other types of cells. But it is becoming increasingly clear that pluripotent stem cells can be derived without killing human embryos. One area of research involves reprogramming regular cells to become stem cells. And a new study has found that stem cells taken from amniotic fluid are pluripotent—and may be more stable than embryonic stem cells to boot. One sometimes gets the impression that some supporters of embryo-destructive research are chiefly concerned to smite the pro-lifers. As the science progresses, however, they may lose the backing of people who are more interested in cures than controversy.

■ For the Left—and, unfortunately, much of the public—conservatives' opposition to raising the minimum wage is proof that we are the kin of Scrooge. Our position is especially heartless because, according to the liberal talking point of the moment, studies have proven that increasing the minimum wage doesn't cost jobs. It would take very strong studies to establish something so counterintuitive: Common sense says that when the price of something is set above market rates, people will buy less of that something—even when that "something" is labor. Most studies, as it happens, confirm the point: On balance, a higher minimum wage kills jobs, especially among the unskilled. Some people will get raises, yes—although few of them will be the people supporting a household who are invoked to arouse our compassion. To help them, we should cut the payroll tax or increase the child tax credit. The minimum wage, meanwhile, should be abolished, not increased.

■ What is it about cuddly animals that overrides the rational faculty of policymakers? Consider the polar bear (a ferocious carnivore, but it certainly *looks* cuddly). Interior secretary Dirk Kempthorne has recommended that it be listed as "threatened" under the Endangered Species Act. The bears' habitat—Arctic ice—"may literally be melting," Kempthorne explains. The government is required to protect the habitat of a species once it is listed as endangered; so if Kempthorne's wish prevails after a yearlong review, we can expect no shortage of lawsuits trying to cap carbon-dioxide emissions in the name of fighting global warming. But let's pause and consider what we know. Polar bears have survived past periods of significant Arctic warming; hyperventilation over the bears' fate has been prompted mainly by a single study showing a population decline in one region, but we have reason to believe that their worldwide numbers are near historic highs; we have no clue exactly how extensive future ice loss will be; and CO_2 restrictions along the lines of the Kyoto Protocol will have a negligible effect on climate. The wisdom of Kempthorne's position is not readily apparent. On the other hand, polar bears are so cuddly . . .

■ When the highest court in Massachusetts amends the state constitution, how are the people to amend it back? In the case of marriage, supporters of the old law gathered signatures and went to the legislature to put the issue on the ballot. Only a quarter of the legislature had to approve to move the issue forward. But liberals put up a roadblock. They said that "fundamental rights shouldn't be put up to a vote" (in which case it is hard to see why the Founders bothered to hold constitutional conventions). The Democratic majority chose to kill the amendment by not holding a vote. Supporters of the amendment then went to the supreme court themselves. The court criticized the legislators' misconduct but said, quite properly if uncharacteristically, that it could not order a remedy. Shame, for once, did the trick, the legislators held the vote, and the issue will probably now be put before the

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We read of scientific research indicating that the earth's crust is billions of years old and that fossils of mankind are being unearthed from thirty thousand years ago. Consider that whoever or whatever created the earth and its people communicates with them by means of natural laws.

Richard W. Wetherill
1906-1989

During the past century, that communication revealed to the late Richard W. Wetherill the existence of a natural law not previously identified, although it relates to a ***principle*** of all natural laws: ***Conform to the action the law prescribes; failure to conform imposes penalties***.

This particular law states: ***Right behavior is logical and moral, and it succeeds; contradictory behavior is illogical or immoral, and it fails.***

When Wetherill identified the law, he called it the ***law of absolute right*** and spent decades teaching people that conformity to that law enabled them to start a new life and to recover from previous failures.

Natural laws exist in reality. The principle stated above is that conformity to the law of absolute right is mandatory and that nonconformity accounts for society's chaotic, deadly affairs.

Wetherill considered it the super-natural law, as all natural laws require strict conformity to their function or penalties are imposed. The ultimate penalty for not conforming to nature's behavioral law, sooner or later, results in death of the body, which explains why death is universally thought to be inevitable.

While people tend to dispute that concept, is there any evidence that their management of human affairs has established peace, stopped criminal activity, preserved life, or eliminated any other unwanted results?

Despite all human efforts to produce a peaceful and productive society, society remains an adversarial and afflicted entity composed of a wide spectrum of do-gooders at one end and terrorists at the other; everybody reacting to the realities of life with irrational judgments that contradict natural law.

Theorize that whoever or whatever is the creator awaits human adjustment to the ***law of absolute right***, knowing that people's well-being depends on taking *right action in every moment of every situation.*

Lacking understanding, even infants form irrational thoughts. Later, those who become heads of nations, influential savants, or persons of no status are influenced by those same infant thoughts in their adult decisions, adding irrational elements that critics hold against them.

In addition, people form personal plans made up of likes and dislikes, wants and don't wants that contradict natural law and cause seemingly endless trouble. Could that be what the creator intends? We think not—based on the communication received from natural laws, providing for everybody's total well-being.

Today those who take pride in *their* plans say this information is demeaning when, in fact, it is the most liberating ever provided humanity. But descriptive words are powerless. *The power to change behavior is found in perceiving the reality of natural laws, not in the words used to define them.*

For example, acting in accord with the reality of natural laws assures conformity to the plan of whoever or whatever is the creator. And as people reason exclusively from those laws, they become aware of a higher purpose in life. A purpose being communicated from the law of absolute right, informing them that natural laws express the creator's plan to form a peacefully vibrant, productive society!

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Text written by E. Marie Bothe, president of The Alpha Publishing House and former assistant to Mr. Wetherill for many years.

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people. Traditionalists are by no means guaranteed a victory, but they are at least to have a voice.

■ Condoleezza Rice has a trip to Libya penciled in her diary. There is an impediment. In a Libyan hospital back in 1998 as many as 426 children began to show signs that they were infected with the AIDS virus. Contaminated needles and poor hygiene were the cause, according to Western experts. This would never do for the Libyans. Moammar Qaddafi accuses the CIA and the Mossad of deliberately infecting the children, some 50 of whom have died. Selected from a number of others to be charged with this improbable crime, five Bulgarian nurses and a Palestinian doctor on the hospital staff have now spent almost eight years in custody, subjected to the worst treatment. In the process, they have been sentenced to death. Qaddafi is apparently willing to drop the charges if the family of every child receives $10 million. This just happens to be the exact sum he agreed to pay to victims of the Lockerbie bombing for which he accepted responsibility. In the event that she goes to Libya, the secretary of state should make it plain that there can be no indulgence of insanities like these.

■ At the beginning of the year, Romania joined the European Union. The entry ticket carried a price. The country had to make an official repudiation of its Communist past. There is a great deal to atone for. Taking power after World War II, the Communists killed about 60,000 people, while a further 300,000 died in labor camps or digging the Danube canal, a Stalin-like undertaking. No European Communist leader was as wantonly cruel to his people as Nicolae Ceausescu, in power in Bucharest for over 20 years. But after his downfall and execution in 1989, his onetime lieutenant, Ion Iliescu, took over and saw to it that power and money remained in the

MCT

Bad Scene

WHAT did your kids get for Christmas? My daughter—not yet four years old—got a whore. Okay, not a real prostitute. Not even a pretend one. She merely got a doll that dresses like one. Oh, and spare me the eye-rolling about how I've become a curmudgeon. I've been to Las Vegas, I've ambled through the seedier parts of cities, and I've quaffed more than a few cocktails at the right (or wrong) bars; I know what hookers look like. No, I have never sampled their wares, but while I've also never ridden an elephant, I've been to enough zoos to know what they look like. In short, this slattern effigy my daughter opened on Christmas morning (we do Chanuka and Christmas at the Goldbergs') was a gum-snapping, six-inch-heeled, F-me-pump-wearing ho. Fo sho.

She got it from a nice lady (a nanny of one of my daughter's friends) who was trying to do a nice thing. But the moment we saw the "My Scene" Barbie, grumbles erupted from everyone—except of course my daughter, who shrieked with ear-piercing delight. The doll came with a little disk full of shiny plastic beads (presumably for her hair). "What are these?" my daughter excitedly asked. Before I could answer, my wife said, "I think they're birth-control pills."

In the December issue of *Texas Monthly*, Virginia Postrel penned an insightful little essay about—of all places—Plano, Texas. One of her basic points is that Plano's fairly conservative residents oppose gay marriage not because they are vexed about sodomy or Biblical injunctions against same, but because they're going to have to explain such things to their kids. "Gays are welcome as colleagues and neighbors," Postrel writes, "as long as they're discreet enough that the kids don't notice anything unusual."

I think Postrel's observation has larger implications. In the 1990s, as Barbara Dafoe Whitehead, Christopher Lasch, and others noted, we had these grand debates about, for example, condoms in schools. Parents, Lasch noted, "are shocked by plans to distribute condoms in the public schools; even if they concede the need for precautions of this kind, they want to know what has brought our society to such a pass." WFB has observed in these pages that the Abercrombie & Fitch catalog is, in the words of one store clerk, "porny." And all you need to do is turn on your TV to see how sexuality drenches even commercials.

People who don't have children, particularly those of a libertarian bent, can be quite romantic—and arrogant—about the power parents have. They talk piously about how it's "up to the parents" to protect children from the seamier aspects of culture, without appreciating that, given the culture, such protection is impossible. I'm not proposing a solution here. I'm not even sure there is one. But I suspect that a lot of what passes for the "culture war" is actually the natural response of parents who think the culture has declared war on their kids.

—JONAH GOLDBERG

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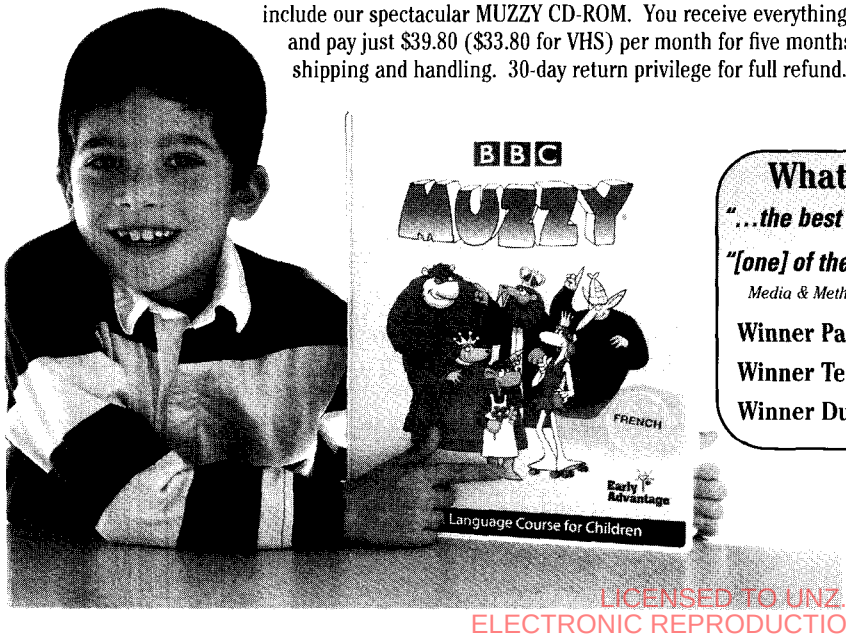

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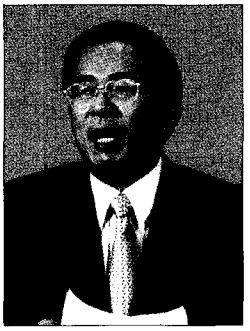
THE WEEK...

hands of the old Communist elite, and he still tries to pass himself off as an elder statesman of the Left. Today's president, Traian Basescu, appointed a presidential commission to investigate the Communist dictatorship. Vladimir Tismaneanu, its head, is a respected scholar at the University of Maryland, specializing in Romanian Communism. The final report comes in at 660 pages, and Tismaneanu explains that the information in it makes the indictment of Communism "quite powerful." In parliament President Basescu made the bluntest condemnation of Communist crimes. Without missing a beat, Iliescu accused Basescu of "McCarthyism." But what's the Romanian for "Sorry"?

■ Ambassador John R. Miller recently resigned from his position as head of the State Department's office concerned with eliminating human trafficking. In his speech at a ceremony recognizing his efforts, Miller denounced the practice, "so egregious, so odious," of referring to prostitutes as "sex workers" and "child sex workers." "An overwhelming majority of adults and children in prostitution," retorted Miller, "are raped, harassed, beaten, and 89 percent want to escape." If the harshness of the term "prostitute" is a concern, there are other terms, Miller had earlier pointed out, "that are neither pejorative nor pretend that violence to women and children is 'work.'" Insincerity is the sedative of weak-willed men whose irresolution comes at the cost of others' sufferings—it must be the cause of immense frustration to those who devote themselves to abolishing a terrible injustice.

■ Gotta watch those Danish artists. A year after the Islamist tantrum over the Mohammed cartoons, a Danish arts group, Surrend, took out an ad in the *Tehran Times* under the name Danes for World Peace, listing a series of fraternal sentiments under a photo of President Mahmoud Ahmadenijad. Keen-eyed readers noted that the first letters of the five slogans ("Support his fight against Bush," "We are also tired of Bush," etc.) spelled out S-W-I-N-E. The copyeditor was beheaded. Just kidding! Islamists don't do that kind of thing. Surrend consists of two artists, Jan Egesborg and Pia Bertelsen. They picked on Ahmadenijad "because we don't think he's very liberal or sensitive. We think he represents an extreme ideology." What do we think of the splendid Danes and their stunt? Bravo, really, and very exhilarating.

■ Somalia is neither a state nor a nation. Four main clans and some five lesser ones throw up warlords whose militias dispute everything in their clan's name. Since 1991 there has been no government, and the Kalashnikov rules. The one and only thing that Somalis have in common is Islam. A movement known as the Islamic Courts duly mustered, with help and blessings from al-Qaeda. The Courts drove out the warlords and established Islamic law. There is no doubt that many Somalis were glad to have security from the warlords even if this meant no movies, no music, and no alcohol. The Islamic Courts might have rested on their victory, but instead they were rash enough to threaten neighboring Ethiopia, a historic rival, a proper military power, and Christian at that. Starting at Christmas, Ethiopian forces have swiftly smashed the Courts, and its recruits are back with their clans. Nobody really knows how many Qaeda members escaped, but U.S. ships are on the lookout for them, and aircraft are carrying out sporadic strikes on land as well. This is a marked victory in the war against Islamism. But the Ethiopian troops are due to withdraw soon, and the warlords are seeing to it that the Kalashnikovs are again serviceable. Somalia joins Afghanistan and Iraq on the list of places in urgent need of transformation into nation-states.



■ One of those news stories that turn up so often they could wellnigh be assigned word-processor macros all their own, is the one about the Chinese government protesting because the president of Taiwan has set foot on U.S. soil. That story cropped up again the other day, as Chen Shui-bian was allowed stopovers in San Francisco and Los Angeles on his way to and from the inauguration of Nicaraguan president Daniel Ortega. Nicaragua is one of 24 nations that have diplomatic relations with Taiwan, though Ortega has said he intends to review this. Beijing duly protested the U.S. stopovers. The issue of whether to grant permission for such visits is nontrivial for our State Department. Chen is something of a loose cannon, given to tweaking the Dragon's tail unnecessarily on occasion, to the irritation of our policymakers as well as large segments of his own population. When all is said and done, though, he is the elected leader

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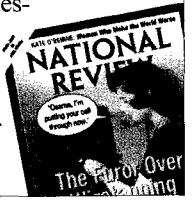

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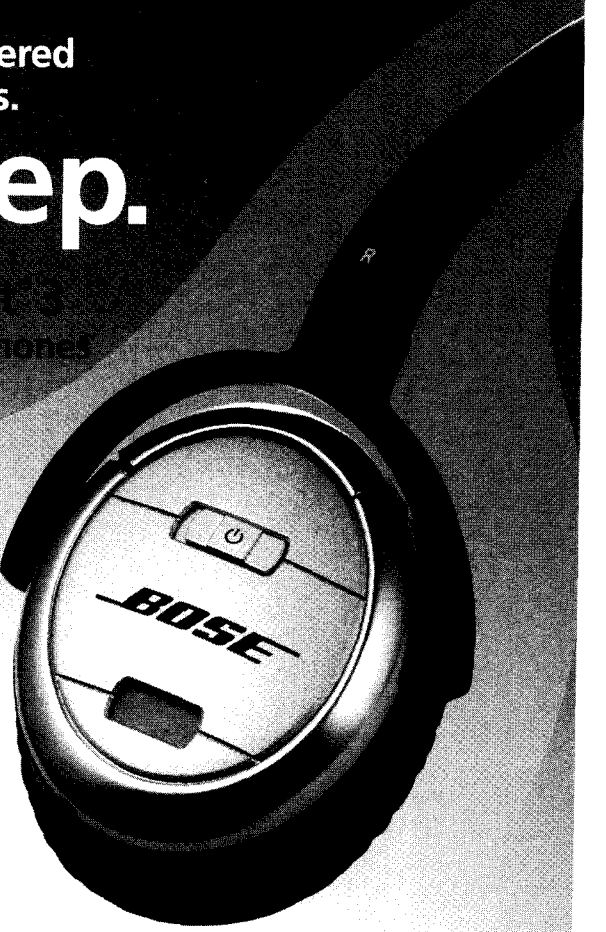

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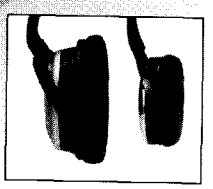

QC2 headphones (left). New QC3 headphones (right).

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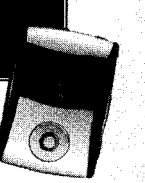

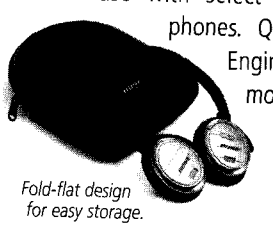

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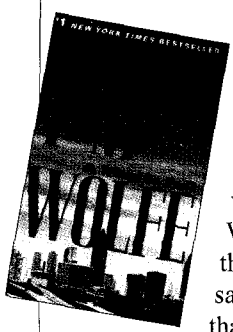
THE WEEK...

of an old friend and ally of the United States and should be accorded proper courtesies, even at the cost of some friction with Red China. We welcome President Chen to our country, and hope he will enjoy his visits.

■ The bus system of Grand Rapids, Mich., formerly turned away from their buses any passenger whose face was covered. This was a reasonable policy—think of ski masks, or the nylon-stocking head coverings favored by bank robbers. The policy has now been rescinded, following an incident in which a Muslim woman in full traditional garb, only her eyes visible, was turned away by a bus driver. It goes without saying that the lady is now lawyered up, the ACLU is issuing demands, and the bus-system suits are in full multicultural grovel mode: "reviewing policies" . . . "modifying [our] diversity training materials" . . . "deeply regret" . . . etc. The punch line of this sorry little episode comes from the lady herself. Said this latter-day Rosa Parks: "I didn't tell anyone at first. But I have a daughter and I don't want her to be ashamed to cover her face."

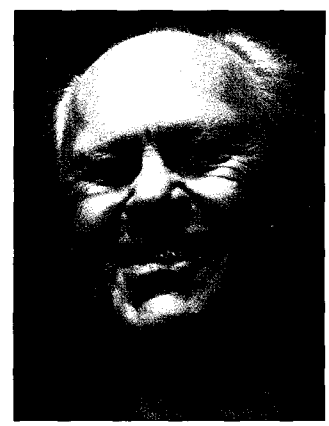


■ Readers of Tom Wolfe's novels will recall the scene in *A Man in Full* where a country-raised southern business mogul, showing a group of urban sophisticates round his stud farm, arranges for them to witness a stallion vigorously serving a mare. When this very arresting performance is over, the mogul turns to the stunned spectators and says: "They can talk about gay rights . . . but that's what it all boils down to at the end, the male and the female." That gentleman would be distressed to learn that the right of farm animals to be homosexual is now a topic of serious public discussion. Homosexuality is rife among sheep, you see. Eight percent of rams prefer to bestow their favors on other rams, creating an obvious commercial problem for breeders. Scientists are trying to develop some treatment that could be applied to pregnant ewes to ensure their offspring will grow up heterosexual. This research has aroused the wrath of homosexual-rights advocates, among them the tennis superstar Martina Navratilova, who described the research as "homophobic and cruel." Given that most sheep end up on our dinner plates, the right to sexual eccentricity is surely the least of ovine life issues.

■ The outrageousness of the Duke lacrosse case has now reached its terminal velocity. The rape charges have been dropped against the three defendants, but they still face prosecution for the sexual assault and kidnapping of an "exotic dancer" last March. There is no physical evidence or eyewitness testimony to support the allegations. The credibility of the accuser couldn't be more damaged, and yet the case for the prosecution seems to rely on nothing else. The prosecutor faces misconduct charges from his state bar association for making irresponsible public statements about the case and trying to suppress DNA tests that showed no link between the defendants and the crime. The Duke story came to national attention in a frenzy of class and racial guilt and recrimination. It now appears, like so many such frenzies, to have been based on lies, ideology, and opportunism.

■ The linguists and lexicographers of the American Dialect Society have picked a Word of the Year for 2006, and the winner is . . . *plutoed*. To "pluto" is to demote or devalue a person or thing, as was done to the unfortunate Solar System body of that name at an August 2006 meeting of the International Astronomical Union. Pluto was formerly the ninth planet. Now it is merely a "dwarf planet," and the number of true planets is eight. "Mrs Montagu has dropt me," grumbled Samuel Johnson, the greatest of all lexicographers. "Now, Sir," he added, "there are people whom one should like very well to drop, but would not wish to be dropped by." We feel the same way about plutoing and being plutoed. May our readers feel free to pluto, when occasion demands it, but may they never be plutoed.

■ From 1991 to 2002, this magazine ran Florence King's column "The Misanthrope's Corner." These columns are collected in the book *STET, Damnit!* And now the incomparable King will have a new column: "The Bent Pin." It will run in every other issue. And you may find it, this time, on page 41. Enjoy!



■ Was there ever a president who entered office with a weaker hand than Gerald Ford? Elevated by two scandalous resignations, he faced a sea of troubles—a weak economy, a prowling Evil Empire, and an angry conservative movement (including this magazine). Oh, yes, we wanted to end Gerald Ford's career even sooner than Jimmy Carter ended it in November 1976, by winning the Republican nomination for Ronald Reagan the summer before. Our distress had less to do with specific bad choices that Ford made (although there were a number of these: tapping liberal Nelson Rockefeller as vice president; keeping a détentist Henry Kissinger at his right hand) than with his temperamental meliorism. America needed bolder measures than Gerald Ford was proposing. While we owe it to history to say that, we owe it to Ford to say that he performed his constitutional task admirably. America had never had an unelected president; his humility and decency made the transition work, investing the legal fine print with an air of legitimacy. R.I.P.

■ One star differeth from another star in glory, said the Apostle Paul. Something similar applies in the terrestrial sphere, and among the different varieties of worldly glory, the commercial

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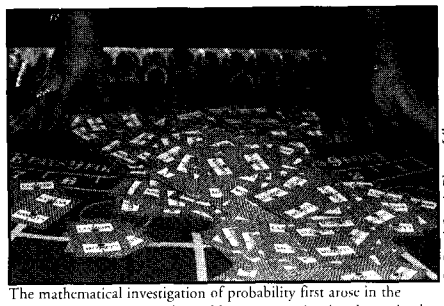

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The mathematical investigation of probability first arose in the 17th century, when a French gambler, Antoine Gombaud, sought the advice of mathematicians Pierre Fermat and Blaise Pascal about a gambling game.

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Professor Michael Starbird is a distinguished and highly popular teacher with an uncommon talent for making the wonders of mathematics clear. He is Professor of Mathematics and a Distinguished Teaching Professor at The University of Texas at Austin, where he has received the President's Associates Teaching Award, the Jean Holloway Award for Teaching Excellence, and the Friar Society Centennial Teaching Fellowship.

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kind is by no means to be despised. We therefore note with respect and regret the passing of Mr. Momofuku Ando, inventor of instant noodles. Born in Taiwan—then a Japanese colony—in 1910, Mr. Ando was a self-made man, who retired as chairman of Nissin Food Products only in 2005, and was still giving speeches a few days before his death. Over 80 billion servings of Nissin's noodles are consumed every year. As a contribution to the small amenities of life, especially in Asia, Mr. Ando's achievement is hard to beat. May he rest in peace with his ancestors—a true benefactor of humanity, who did no harm and much good, and got immensely rich thereby.

■ James Brown wrote in his autobiography, "Hair and teeth. A man got those two things he's got it all." James Brown had it all and more—even a pair of eyebrows tattooed permanently on his face in 1991. A singer, a dancer, and a scream, Brown was in death as in life a showman, and was paraded through Harlem in a golden coffin before being laid in state at the Apollo Theater, his favorite venue. James Brown died Christmas morning at the age of 73; the hardest-working man in show business, rest now. R.I.P.

■ Elizabeth Fox-Genovese possessed a brilliant mind, as do many. What set her apart was courage. She began her academic career as a secular liberal, but eventually concluded that abortion is a "choice" by one human being to kill another. That was intellectual honesty; courage was what it took for a founding mother of Women's Studies to passionately advocate this view. She broke wholly with the ideology of the sexual revolution, defended marriage and traditional morality, and embraced Christianity. She leaves behind a valuable body of scholarship, and, more important, a powerful witness to the sanctity of human life. R.I.P.

AT WAR

A Surge in Time

As we went to press, President Bush was on the verge of announcing a "surge" of new troops into Baghdad. The idea is to devote enough troops to clear and then hold neighborhoods in the capital city. Our recent failed Baghdad security plan, Operation Together Forward, had American troops clearing neighborhoods and then leaving them to inadequate Iraqi forces, at which point they tended to revert back to lawlessness. The operation was nearly pointless, and Baghdad became more violent during its conduct.

The surge results from Bush's thorough reevaluation of his Iraq policy. Even before the midterm elections, he had (belatedly) begun to realize that our approach was not working. He fired defense secretary Donald Rumsfeld, an architect of the "light footprint" strategy that sought to minimize our presence on the ground and emphasize training the Iraqis. Reasonable enough in theory, the strategy amounted to standing aside as Iraq's violence mutated into a civil war that risks destroying any political progress in the country and tearing apart the security forces that we have been training. Bush also pushed toward the exits the two generals who shared Rumsfeld's belief in the light footprint, CENTCOM commander John Abizaid and his deputy in Iraq, Gen. George Casey. When Rumsfeld and Bush used to say that they weren't sending more troops to Iraq because the generals weren't asking for them, they were—unfortunately—telling the truth.

Bush is replacing Casey with Lt. Gen. David Petraeus, who got high marks in his previous tours in Iraq and had a large hand in writing the Army's new counterinsurgency manual. Generally considered one of the most talented generals in the Army, Petraeus has dissented from the light-footprint strategy and supports the surge. Bush has finally taken an approach more appropriate to his role as commander-in-chief—not mindlessly deferring to his generals, but picking ones who support his strategy and are committed to carrying it out.

The point of the surge is to provide enough security in Baghdad that the furies of revenge and hatred don't spin utterly out of control. Violence has radicalized Iraq, with cleric-thug Moqtada al-Sadr gaining ground as the civil war intensifies. So long as the sectarian violence continues unchecked, his power and influence will only increase, and Iraq will head toward a gruesome breakup in which Iran will likely effectively control the Shiite portion of Iraq and Sunni radicals their own rump—if, that is, Sunnis aren't cleansed from the country entirely. Neighboring countries might pick away at Iraq's carcass, U.S. prestige would plummet, and Iran and Saudi Arabia would again compete for strategic influence in the region by promoting their rival but equally noxious radicalisms.

Violence has radicalized Iraq, with cleric-thug Moqtada al-Sadr gaining ground as the civil war intensifies. So long as the sectarian violence continues unchecked, his power and influence will only increase, and Iraq will head toward a gruesome breakup.

It might still be possible to forestall this outcome, although it looks more difficult by the hour. We suspect many opponents of the surge simply believe the Iraq War is unwinnable. That is not an unreasonable position, but it is one they should declare openly rather than pretending that the status quo or the beginning of a drawdown is going to improve conditions in Iraq (force the Iraqis to "pull up their socks," in Rumsfeld's phrase).

There are several arguments against the surge. It has been said that it doesn't have a clear military objective. But clearing and holding populated areas is such an objective. It is also a standard counterinsurgency technique, and is right there in the new counterinsurgency manual.

It is said that the surge won't include enough troops because—operating on the standard ratio of 20 combat troops per 1,000 residents in counterinsurgency situations—it will take 120,000 combat troops to secure Baghdad's 6 million people. Of course, the Bush administration's record of providing

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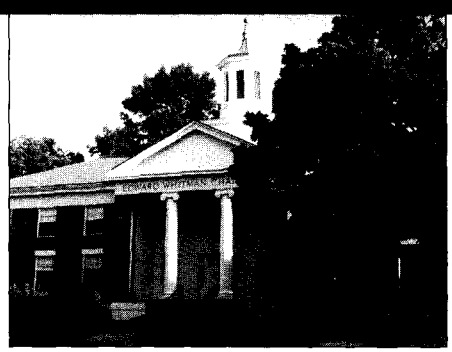

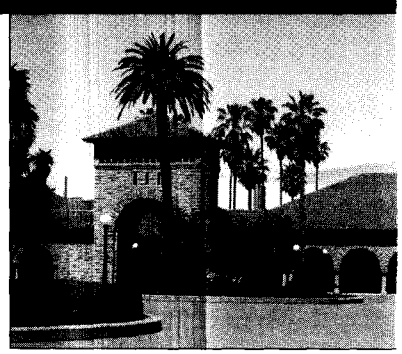

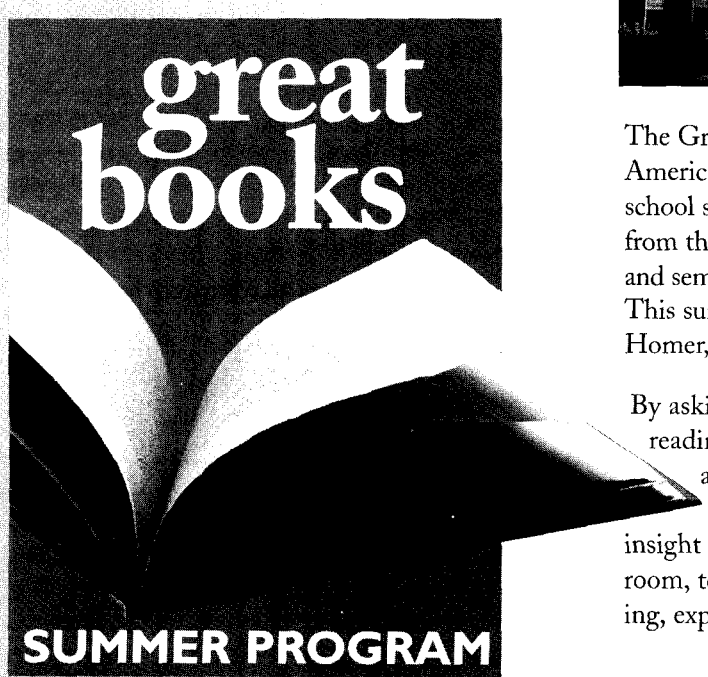

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enough manpower to Iraq is a poor one, and it is a safe bet that it will send fewer troops than would be ideal. It is difficult to find any additional troops because Bush left the post-9/11 military too small, a grave mistake he is only now beginning to rectify. All that said, the campaign is likely to start by concentrating on mixed Sunni–Shiite Baghdad neighborhoods where the U.S. will have the proper ratio of troops to clear-and-hold.

It is argued that a plan to secure Baghdad can't succeed without taking on al-Sadr (Bing West makes this case elsewhere in the issue). But that might be too big a bite at the moment, and would risk radicalizing more Shiites and toppling the government of Iraqi prime minister Nouri al-Maliki. Cutting al-Sadr down to size—unless he's reckless enough to confront us directly again—will necessarily be a delicate, touch-and-go task.

Surge critics note that the Iraq War is not just a military venture, but has to be won politically. True. That is why the Bush surge will include more economic aid and political benchmarks for the Maliki government to meet.

Finally, in a related point, some contend that the sectarian nature and incompetence of Maliki's government is the problem and that a surge won't address it. We have always counseled realistic expectations for post-Saddam politics in Iraq. But even with appropriately chastened expectations, Maliki's government is close to unacceptability. A surge resulting in increased security might give his government breathing space to find its footing, reaching out to the Sunnis and purging the corrupt and murderous sectarians in its midst. For now, the administration believes Maliki is committed to the new plan and will provide significant Iraqi forces to support it.

At this point, it should hardly need saying that there is no guarantee of success in Iraq. The surge is a risk. Its cost will be dear in increased American casualties. It holds political peril, too, for Republicans. In the short term, violence might increase, giving opponents an opening to say they told us so. If it fails altogether, the GOP will probably lose its historical advantage over Democrats on national security for some time to come.

But because the war is not yet lost, we must try to regain the upper hand. The surge is the only realistic option for success. Bush is brave and correct to embrace it. It should have been done before, and we can only hope that it works now.

POLITICS

Their Moment

KATHA POLLITT, a left-wing commentator, complains in *The Nation* that the newly empowered Democrats' "program is so modest you need a microscope to see it." True enough. One Democratic bill would authorize the president to use the federal government's bargaining power to lower the price of medicine. Negotiating the price of drugs down might be a step toward price controls on the pharmaceutical industry. But since President Bush opposes such price controls, he won't use the authority, and the bill will have no effect until 2009 at the earliest.

It is politically smart for Democrats to advance that sort of small-bore proposal. They seem to realize, as the Gingrich Republicans did not in 1995, that nowadays it is impossible to govern America from Capitol Hill. Instead, they are using their first "100 hours" to associate themselves with popular causes and to put Republicans in tight spots, the better to win more elections in 2008. A few of those causes are even worthwhile. Democrats enacted ethics reforms that the Republicans should have enacted last year, or even earlier (although they rather sneakily included in their reforms a set of tax-friendly changes to the budget rules).

But the contrast does not tell entirely in their favor. Unlike the Gingrich Republicans, the Pelosi Democrats do not appear to believe in very much. And the popularity of their causes is thin. The public supports federal funding for embryonic-stem-cell research, for example, but there is no clamor for it. The policy issue that more than any other elected the Democratic Congress was the Iraq War, but the Democrats have no mandate to do anything in particular about it, which is why so far they have not tried.

Unlike the Gingrich Republicans, the Pelosi Democrats do not appear to believe in very much. And the popularity of their causes is thin.

The bloom will start coming off Pelosi's rose pretty quickly. Her party's Left and Right may not be able to paper over their differences; 61 House Democrats come from districts that voted for Bush in 2004, compared with only eight Republicans from pro-Kerry districts. Senate Democrats may not want to follow the House's lead. For the moment, however, the public is not paying any attention to the congressional Republicans.

They should count themselves lucky for that. Too few Republican congressmen understand the extent to which the election amounted to a public rebuke of them for seeming to be more interested in preserving their power and perks than serving the country. Many congressmen prefer to blame the election on the president's handling of Iraq—which indeed contributed to the losses, but hardly makes the congressmen blameless. In the days surrounding Pelosi's ascension to the Speakership, the chief Republican talking point concerned the unfairness of her treatment of Republicans. Most people don't care. And why should they? They should care if the Democrats' high-handedness is bottling up popular conservative amendments—but to make that case, Republicans will have to come up with some and sell them first.

The White House hasn't found its footing yet, either. In the *Wall Street Journal*, the president called on Congress to work with him on an agenda whose centerpiece was . . . the line-item veto. Perhaps Bush wants to let the Democrats do the proposing, rather than the disposing. There is some strategic sense in that posture—but not enough to justify an entirely reactive approach.

The Democrats' "100 hours" slogan is meant to hark back to FDR's "100 Days." We prefer to hope that it will be more like Napoleon's. But Republicans will have to do better than they are now doing to bring about that happy end.

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When he ruled

■ COVER STORY ■

An Unusual End

Saddam Hussein is tried and executed

DAVID PRYCE-JONES

SADDAM HUSSEIN was a ruler in the mold familiar for centuries in the Arab and Muslim world, disposing of life and death as he saw fit. About the only thing to be said in favor of absolute rule of this kind is that it makes life broadly predictable. Such a ruler rewards family and tribal and sectarian loyalty, and punishes all conceivable disloyalty: Everyone can take intelligent or at least self-serving precautions. Saddam cannot have expected to go to the gallows for ordering the killing of the villagers of Dujail, but after his genocidal brutalities neither can he have expected to die in his bed.

Caliphs, sultans, and emirs—and, in the modern age, Middle Eastern kings, presidents, and prominent personalities—have all died violent deaths, so many victims of the culture in which they were operating. In all probability Saddam would have continued in power until such time as one of his sons shot him, or the Iranians clandestinely backed some cleric or general to mount a successful coup and suspend his corpse from the gateway of one of his palaces.

It is a vital interest of the United States that absolute rulers of Saddam's kind do not ravage the whole Middle East. Saddam evidently miscalculated American resolve to stop him from doing his worst, and to impose a Pax Americana. In one sense, the hanging of Saddam is only what victors do to losers, and therefore no shock to anyone on the street. But in another sense, the whole process of bringing an absolute ruler to account for his crimes in a courtroom cuts right across the culture. Reaction to this novelty remains uncertain because nobody quite knows what to make of Pax Americana as it unfolds. Throughout history, whoever broke the old absolutism put in place his own version of it. Pax Americana in stark contrast aims to set up power-sharing arrangements of which there has hitherto been no trace. How are Sunni, Shiite, and Kurdish inhabitants of the country to meet on these new terms? Ultimately, who will be the winners, who the losers? American military intervention has made the future unpredictable, not to say unfathomable, and therefore ominous.

Had Saddam not been executed, certain of his fellow Sunnis would have tried every legal and violent maneuver, however desperate, to free him and restore him to power. Miscalculating right up to his death, Saddam himself evidently believed that he would be reprieved in order to lead the Sunnis once again, helping the Americans with their new order. Saddam then handled himself with courage and dignity, a very different figure from the disheveled fugitive not long ago pulled out of a hiding-hole. Some guards filmed Saddam on the scaffold. Every media outlet in the world has shown this film, expressing various degrees of outrage, but like the film of his sons, Uday and Qusay, it serves the important purpose of providing irrefutable evidence that the tyrant really is dead. Guards also taunted him by shouting the name of Moqtada al-Sadr, the Shiite cleric whose power-mania and bloodlust is driving him and his so-called Mahdi militia back towards absolute rule in defiance of Pax Americana.

Ugly and primitive as it may be, Shiite triumphalism of the sort is an inherent aspect of the culture, inspired by centuries of oppression at the hands of the Sunnis, and it is merely Eurocentric to deplore it, as so many non-Muslims are doing. In any case, in the exactly chosen words of an Iraqi-American commentator, Nibras Kazimi, "there is something wrong with your inner core of decency if you are not moved by the sight of a horrible tyrant meeting a just end."

Iran is today driving Shiite triumphalism, and its leaders naturally sounded even more confident and smug than usual as they celebrated Saddam's execution. He had waged a costly war for eight years against Iran, severely setting back the ambition of the ayatollahs to be the undisputed regional power in the Gulf. Saddam had also attacked and devastated Kuwait, and there too spokesmen welcomed his execution as a "gift to humanity." The Middle East, according to a Kuwaiti intellectual quoted in the West, "is coming to a conclusion and learning from the Saddam lesson."

From the Sunnis in general, however, the response has been thin and ragged, far from militant. In what seems like a distraction, spokesmen in Sunni-majority countries, even in Syria, tried to make political capital out of the fact that Saddam was hanged on a major Muslim holiday. In Iraq itself, a sheikh from a mosque named after Saddam was found to utter the customary overblown wish-fulfillments: "Saddam Hussein is a martyr and God will

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put him along with other martyrs. Do not be sad nor complain, because he has died the death of a holy warrior." In exile in Amman, Rana, one of Saddam's daughters and a widow since her father had her husband killed, gives weepy interviews. Here and there in Sunni towns, dejected handfuls of demonstrators did gather, only to go home soon.

An adviser of the Iraqi prime minister appears to have started the rumor that among Saddam's last words were "Palestine is Arab"—the video of his execution at least does not substantiate it. Even this was not enough to activate a mob. Palestinians in Bethlehem opened a "house of condolence" where a few men gathered and drank coffee. In Jenin, also on the West Bank, some hundreds held a mock funeral and there was a small parade in Saddam's honor in Gaza. They were mourning in him a sponsor who paid up to $25,000 for acts of terror and suicide bombings.

Libya, it is true, decreed three days of official mourning, most probably because its absolute ruler, Moammar Qaddafi, is aware that like Saddam he may well not die in his bed. Egyptian journalists are among the last to cherish the flame of Arab nationalism, and their professional guild held a mourning session for a Saddam still perceived as a nationalist hero. In November, President Hosni Mubarak took a position against executing Saddam, and he is now deploring every aspect of what happened. One of the leading Cairo papers, regime-controlled of course, echoed him by speaking all in its own heroic idiom of "a crime whose perpetrators will be pursued by history with rage and shame." From the Arab League with headquarters in Cairo, and supposedly the umbrella organization of Arab states, however, not a word.

Al-Jazeera television has a crafty way of bringing together Arabs and Western fellow-travelers in defense of tyranny. Its website has declared: "The late Iraqi President, Saddam Hussein, has become an Arab icon and a Muslim martyr after his execution by the US-backed government. Rallies in his honour were organised in Jordan, Yemen, Palestine, Sudan, Egypt, and in Iraq." The language insinuates that the Iraqi government has no standing or credibility, and more falsely still that the Arab world is exploding with anger over the execution. On that same website is a plethora of supporting commentary by Muslims (Pakistani, to judge by their names), as well as Westerners, under headings such as "When Justice becomes personal revenge," "Saddam's execution is inhuman," and "Reflections on US crimes in Iraq."

Abdul Bari Atwan is editor of a Saudi-owned newspaper in London. An enthusiastic apologist for Saddam and Osama bin Laden, he is a regular commentator on the BBC, a network whose outlook is hard to distinguish from al-Jazeera's. But the best that even he could do was to deplore the "silence and indifference" of Arab leaders to Saddam's fate.

Why this silence, this indifference, this failure of all efforts to incite? In part, it is because would-be apologists for Saddam necessarily have to put themselves in the position of defending tyranny, obliged to turn a blind eye to its reality of violence and backwardness.

Another motive may be in play. I am not privy to the circles where Sunni leaders meet and confer, in capitals such as Riyadh and Cairo and Amman, but I suspect they leave apologies to their servants on the understanding that Saddam has become yesterday's man, and not to be regretted, because he has made such a mess for them to clear up. Thanks to him and his miscalculations, the regional balance of power has swung away from the Arab Sunnis towards the Iranian Shiites. Palpably, Shiite triumphalism is only another variant of absolute rule. In addition to the prospect of Shiite supremacy in Iraq, there are Shiite minorities in Saudi Arabia, Lebanon, and elsewhere, with powerful potential to disrupt.

Week after week, the Shiite triumphalists in Tehran boast about their military capacity; they test weaponry and utter threats to ravage all points of the compass. Nobody and nothing is apparently going to interrupt their nuclear program. Surely, Sunni leaders must be speculating to one another, a nuclear Iran would be a travesty of any Pax Americana, and the Americans would never stand for it. Their silence and indifference may look like evidence of helplessness, but it also masks subterranean expectations that the Americans are bound to rescue them quite soon from the Shiites. In which case, the world might become predictable again to them. **NR**

■ **PUBLIC POLICY**

'Barbaric!' They Charge

The arrogance and insularity of death-penalty opponents

THEODORE DALRYMPLE

ANYONE who watched Saddam Hussein being led to the gallows without any knowledge of who he was would have concluded that a dignified, decent, and upright man was being informally executed by a gang of criminals. After all, it was he, not they, who showed his face to the world; he, not they, who refused to disguise himself.

And the revelation that he was taunted by his gaolers immediately before his execution, and not allowed to sleep the previous night, has rendered his execution less than optimal, from the public-relations point of view. Anything he might have suffered as a result of mistreatment was, of course, trivial by comparison with the suffering he inflicted on thousands, perhaps millions, of others; but a sense of proportion in moral outrage has never been among the Middle East's great cultural virtues.

The same, alas, is now true of Europe, or of the European official class and its tame intelligentsia. Everyone was agreed, of course, that Saddam was a very bad thing, a dictator who used every method of political persuasion from torture to a bullet in the neck and poison gas. But very few missed the opportunity to express an unctuous self-righteousness about the death penalty.

The editorial of *Le Monde* on the day following, for example, was entitled "No to the Death Penalty," and said that while President Bush may have claimed that the

Mr. Dalrymple is a retired prison psychiatrist and a contributing editor of *City Journal*. He is the author, most recently, of *Romancing Opiates: Pharmacological Lies and the Addiction Bureaucracy*.

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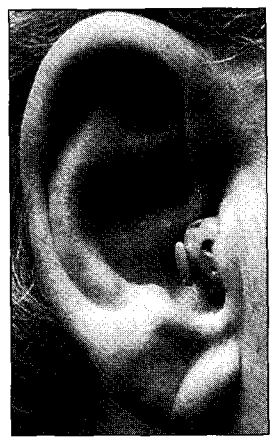

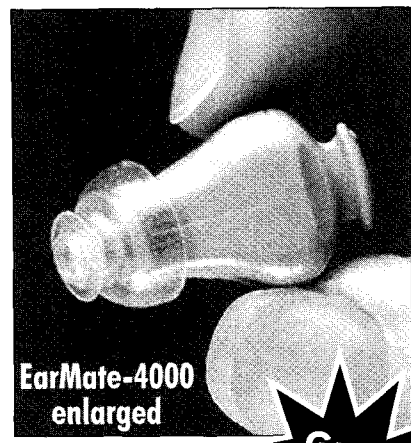

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execution was a step on the path to democracy, "our," that is to say the French and superior, concept of democracy was different. The British foreign secretary and Irish foreign minister took the opportunity to express British and Irish opposition to the death penalty; the position of the Italian prime minister was even stronger (or weaker, depending on how you look at it); the Vatican also took the opportunity to express its opposition to the death penalty; and the European commissioner for foreign aid, M. Louis Michel, former foreign minister of that land of irreproachable integrity, Belgium, said, "You don't fight barbarism with acts that I deem as barbaric. The death penalty is not compatible with democracy."

In general, Europeans of the official class spoke as if the death penalty had been abolished in Europe in about 479 B.C., when it was abolished in Britain in 1965 and in France in 1981, not exactly historical epochs ago, even in the baby-boomers' truncated historical perspective. Whatever the practical political consequences of the execution of Saddam, which are inherently uncertain, the fact is that the European leaders are so entirely, parochially, and narrow-mindedly enclosed within their own worldview that they are now unable to conceive of any opinion but their own.

The egregious M. Michel seems to be implying that the two largest and most important democracies in the world, the U.S.A. and India, cannot actually be democracies at all because they have the death penalty. He also seems to be saying that New Zealand, Britain, Australia, Canada, and France were not democracies until 1961, 1965, 1973, 1976, and 1981, an odd reading of history, to say the least. Such is the ignorant arrogance of the great ones of Europe, who must have been confirmed in their decision not to allow any kind of democratic intervention in their deliberations by learning that in fact a clear majority of Europeans believed that Saddam ought to have been executed. If that is what people think, they clearly ought to be abolished.

The self-righteousness of the leaders was such that they seem totally unaware that there are any arguments in favor of the death penalty, and this is so whether or not you actually agree with the penalty.

Let us take Britain as an example. The homicide rate has doubled since the abolition, but the rate of homicidal violence has increased by up to ten times, if an American study is correct that improvements in trauma medicine have reduced the death rate from such violence by four-fifths. Moreover, the type of killings that would once have attracted the death penalty—for the majority of homicides were never punished by the death penalty in Britain—has increased disproportionately.

In Britain, at least 139 homicides have been committed since the abolition of the death penalty by people released after serving prison sentences for homicide. A further 98 killings have been perpetrated by people on parole for some lesser crime, in the last two years alone. While this is not directly relevant to the question of capital punishment, the abolition of the supreme penalty necessarily renders the whole criminal justice system less severe (the fitness of the punishment to the crime has to be scaled down proportionately), and it is difficult to believe that the vastly greater willingness of the population in Britain to commit acts of great violence is completely unrelated to this fact.

The effectiveness of the death penalty as a deterrent would have to be only very slight for it to be worthwhile from the point of view of saving lives. In the last 65 years of the penalty in Britain, about 13 people were hanged per year. If the deterrent effect were only 2 percent, it would save 16 lives per year. Moreover, the lives lost on one hand would be those of murderers, and on the other of the victims of murderers. It seems to me to be carrying the principle of all being born equal a little far if we don't prefer to save the lives of victims rather than those of perpetrators—assuming, of course, that the deterrent rate of 2 percent is real.

One of the principal, and best, arguments against the death penalty is the possibility of error. And of course to be done to death wrongly by the state is a terrible thing. But I have always been struck by the disparity between the outrage caused by errors committed by what, after all, is due process, all human institutions being fallible, and the outrage caused by killings committed by previously convicted killers.

Although I have not investigated the matter myself, I have been told by two people who have investigated it closely that there were five judicial errors in the last 65 years of the death penalty in Britain. Let us multiply by ten, to be on the safe side. This would still be only 36 percent of the number of people killed by already-convicted killers in a period of time only 63 percent as long.

A single case is, perhaps, emblematic. Recently, a 34-year-old man was convicted of murder after burning down the house of his 16-year-old former girlfriend, who no longer wished to see him, in the process killing not only her, but her brother, sister, and stepfather. A few months before, he had been released from prison after serving three and a half years of a seven-year sentence for having bashed in the skull of a woman who refused to leave her husband for him, fracturing it in seven places. This appalling case aroused no echo whatsoever in the intelligentsia, so tender for the rights of Saddam, even though the man's personal tally was equal to that of the entire judicial system over 65 years—that is, if my informants with regard to the errors are to be believed.

None of this is decisive. Even if the death penalty could be proved beyond all doubt to be a deterrent, it would still be open to opponents of the penalty to argue the deontological case that the state must never take life. But this would require perfectly consistent pacifism, which not many of our leaders adhere to. Even St. Romano Prodi would probably expect his bodyguards to shoot to kill if someone were about to throw a bomb at him—and this without due process.

Moreover, it is important for deontologists among abolitionists to realize that a deontological argument can be put on the other side: that it is the duty of the state to maintain the death penalty, irrespective of its practical effects, because it has no right to extend mercy to brutal killers who are without extenuating circumstances.

I am not arguing that the death penalty is right; I am arguing that there is a serious case in its favor. This being so, European politicians have no business preening themselves on their moral superiority to everyone else, including in many cases their own electorates. It is dishonest to pretend that there is nothing to be said on the question opposite the side they take, and that only primitives and scoundrels do so. But then dishonesty makes the careers of such politicians, and not just their careers; it is, as the French say, their *métier*. **NR**

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POLITICS

Join the Club

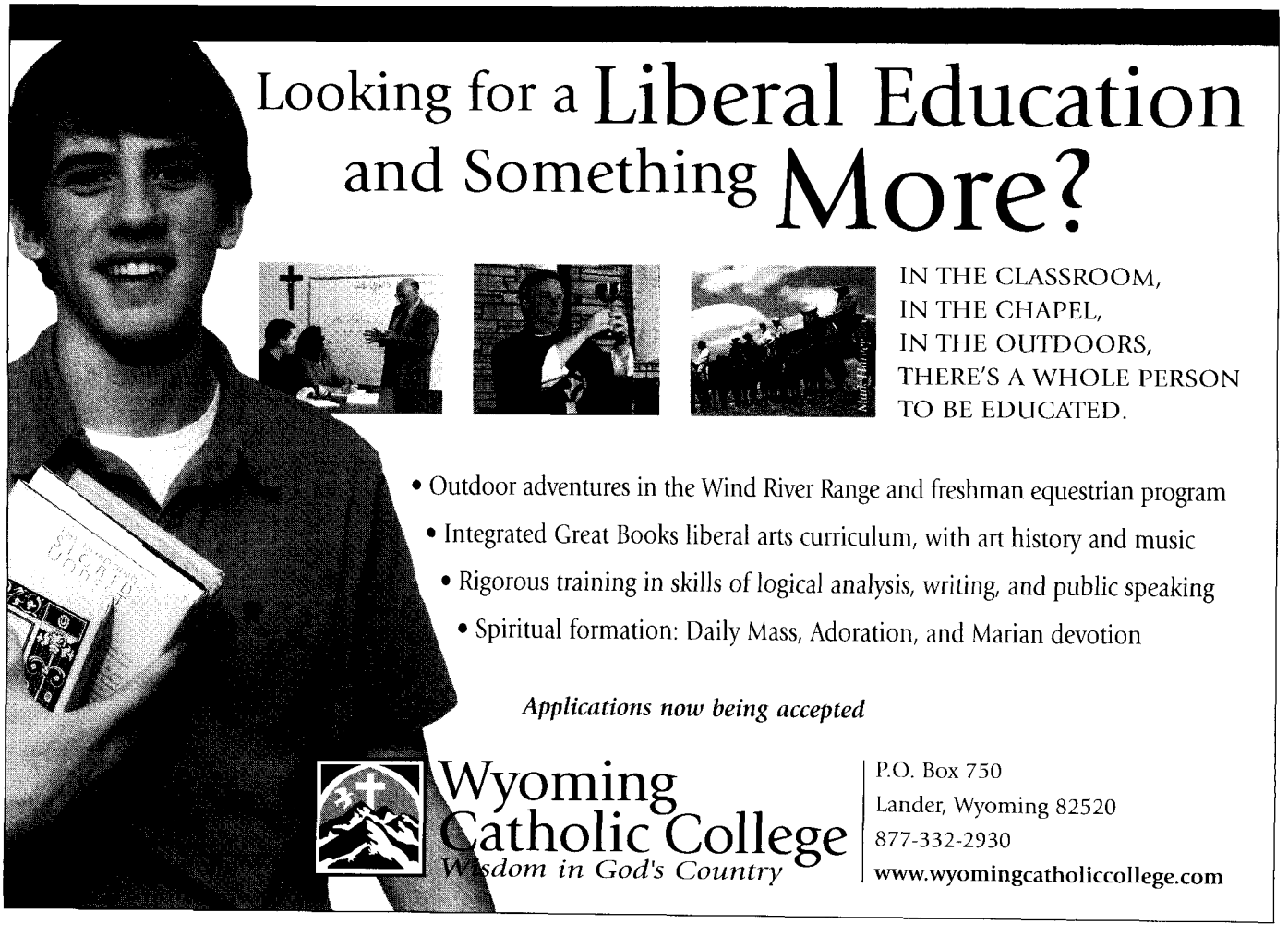
Mitt Romney and pro-life conversion

KATE O'BEIRNE

For decades, pro-life activists have been in the business of winning hearts and minds to their cause. Powerful arguments about the humanity of the unborn have moved public opinion, and a pro-life political force has made ambitious politicians feel the heat, whether or not they see the light. Pro-lifers' faith in the power of persuasion has been rewarded, and their political clout increased, by important converts, including Presidents Ronald Reagan and George W. Bush. Mitt Romney has also changed his position on abortion, but some social conservatives argue that membership in their ranks should be closed to this most recent convert with presidential ambitions.

In 1967, Gov. Ronald Reagan signed a liberal abortion law, declaring, "I'm fully sympathetic with attempts to liberalize the outdated abortion law now on the books in California." Reagan later changed his mind and expressed regret for signing a measure that saw more abortions performed in California than in any other state before *Roe* v. *Wade*. He became a committed pro-life politician and backed the first pro-life plank in the Republican platform. George W. Bush ran as a pro-choice politician in his 1978 congressional campaign, but held pro-life views when he ran for the governorship of Texas in 1994. His father too once favored abortion rights, but took a pro-life position in the 1980 presidential campaign.

When Sam Brownback was running in a GOP congressional primary in 1994, he initially rebuffed a pro-life group's endorsement, according to a recent account in *The New Republic*. In that article, a former president of Kansans for Life recalls that Brownback was "unfamiliar with the anti-abortion lexicon" 20 years after *Roe* v. *Wade*, and that Brownback described himself as "more in line with the view of Nancy Kassebaum," the state's pro-choice junior GOP senator. But Brownback wound up facing a primary challenger who, as the article puts it, "was about as pro-life as you could get without earning yourself a restraining order." Prior to the race, Brownback had never had to defend his abortion views; but by Primary Day he was on the record as an abortion opponent. The article plausibly asserts that Brownback, who has formed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a presidential exploratory committee, "is closing in on a decade as the leading social conservative in the U.S. Senate" (though Rick Santorum also has a claim to that title).

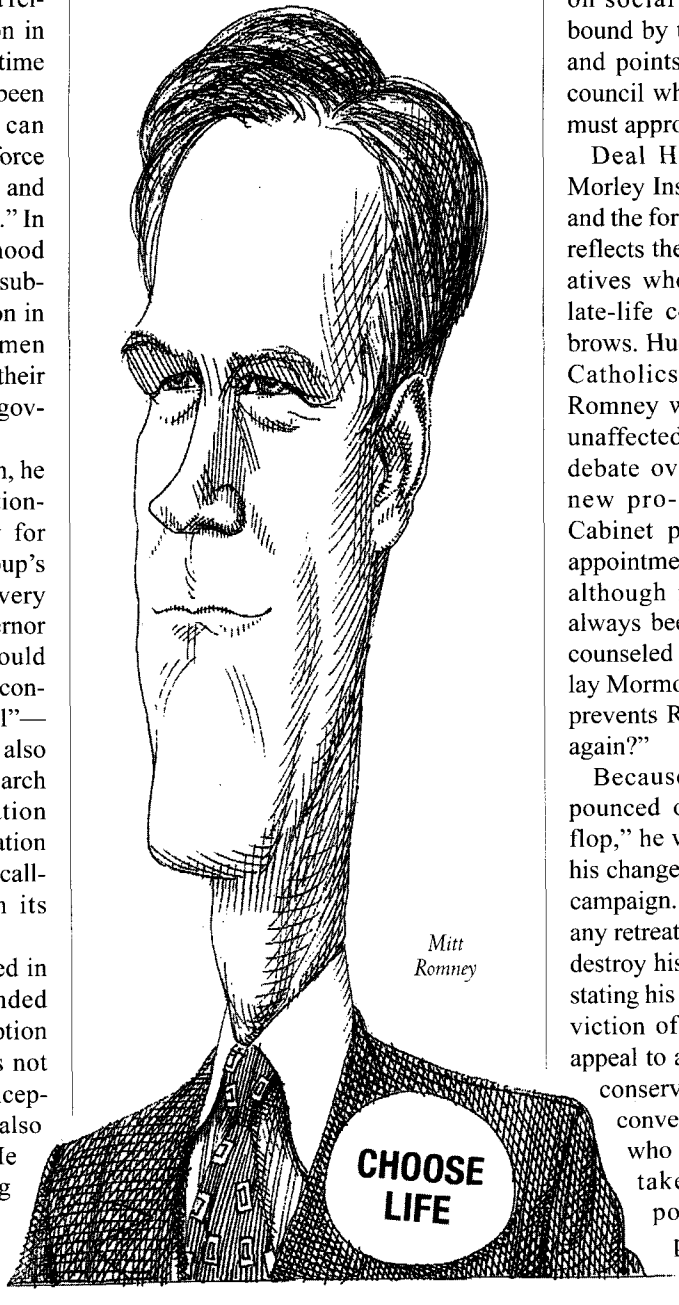
Although the experiences of three presidents and Sam Brownback strongly support the argument that genuine conversions happen, and that pro-life converts remain faithful, Mitt Romney's change of heart has been met in some conservative quarters with hostile skepticism.

Romney ran as a pro-choice candidate in his 1994 Senate race against Ted Kennedy and in his 2002 gubernatorial campaign. In 1994, he revealed that a relative had died of a botched abortion in the 1960s, and said, "It is since that time that my mother and my family have been committed to the belief that we can believe as we want, but we will not force our beliefs on others on that matter, and you will not see me wavering on that." In 2002, he assured Planned Parenthood and NARAL that he supported "the substance of the Supreme Court decision in *Roe* v. *Wade*"; he also said, "Women should be free to choose based on their own beliefs, not mine and not the government's."

During his gubernatorial campaign, he won the endorsement of the abortion-rights group Republican Majority for Choice. But three years later, the group's co-chairman declared, "We feel very betrayed." The reason was that Governor Romney had vetoed a bill that would have allowed access to emergency contraception—the "morning-after pill"—without a prescription. Romney had also vetoed an embryonic-stem-cell-research bill; and last year his administration issued regulations banning the creation of embryos for research purposes, calling such research "Orwellian in its scope."

In an opinion article that appeared in the *Boston Globe*, Romney defended his veto of the emergency-contraception bill. He explained, "The bill does not involve only the prevention of conception: The drug it authorizes would also terminate life after conception." He faulted the bill for not requiring parental consent before allowing minors access to the pill. And he wrote, "I understand that my views on laws governing abortion set me in the minority in our Commonwealth. I am prolife. I believe that abortion is the wrong choice except in cases of incest, rape, and to save the life of the mother."

Does Romney's acknowledged change on abortion ("I had this issue wrong in the past," he frankly allows) make him the wrong presidential choice for conservatives? Some social conservatives in Massachusetts have been circulating a dossier of Romney's past statements on abortion and gay rights, which have been widely quoted by his critics. And some claim that, as governor, Romney should have been more confrontational in advancing conservative positions.



Mitt Romney

ROMAN GENN

For example, although Romney has won praise for defending traditional marriage following the court decision that legalized same-sex marriage in Massachusetts, some of his conservative critics argue that he could have ignored the court and prohibited the issuance of marriage licenses to homosexual couples. He is also faulted for appointing two gay-rights activists, both former prosecutors, to local criminal courts. But Evangelicals for Mitt, a website that has convincingly defended Romney's record on social issues, argues that he was bound by the court's marriage decision, and points out that in Massachusetts a council wholly composed of Democrats must approve all judicial nominees.

Deal Hudson, the director of the Morley Institute for Church and Culture and the former editor of *Crisis* magazine, reflects the skepticism of some conservatives when he argues that Romney's late-life conversion should raise eyebrows. Hudson writes on his blog: "Can Catholics trust that the 59-year-old Romney who was pro-choice and was unaffected by three decades of public debate over abortion would carry his new pro-life convictions over into Cabinet personnel decisions, judicial appointments, and public policy?" And although it appears that Romney has always been personally pro-life, having counseled women against abortion as a lay Mormon leader, Hudson asks, "What prevents Romney from converting back again?"

Because the media have gleefully pounced on Romney's abortion "flip-flop," he will be called upon to explain his change of heart frequently during the campaign. As a practical political matter, any retreat from his current stance would destroy his credibility. Romney has been stating his abortion position with the conviction of a convert, in terms that can appeal to a broad audience. Many social conservatives are persuaded that his conversion is genuine. But pro-lifers who doubt Romney's sincerity can take heart: When "ambitious" politicians "cynically" adopt pro-life views, it is because pro-lifers are winning. **NR**

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■ CAPITOL HILL

Undiscussable

A question in the Senate

BYRON YORK

JUST hours after word got out that South Dakota senator Tim Johnson had fallen ill with a serious brain ailment, minority leader Mitch McConnell's office got in touch with Republicans around the Senate. The message: Do not—repeat, do not—talk about the political implications of Johnson's illness. Besides being genuinely concerned about Johnson, Republicans worried about their image and didn't want even to hint that they were seeking any advantage from their Democratic colleague's misfortune.

But the fact is, given the narrowness of the Democrats' 51–49 margin in the new Senate, Johnson's illness got people talking. If Johnson were to die, or had to leave the Senate, and if he were replaced by a Republican appointed by South Dakota's Republican governor, a 50–50 Senate would swing to GOP control, with Vice President Dick Cheney's tie-breaking vote. The stakes were clearly high. Still, when the Senate convened in early January—with Johnson still hospitalized—Republicans said pretty much nothing about the politics of it all.

It was a far cry from early 2001, when Democrats capitalized on what was known as the "Strom Thurmond Death Watch." At the time, the Senate was split 50–50, plus Cheney's vote, meaning that a switch of one senator would throw control into Democratic hands. That, of course, is what happened when Vermont's James Jeffords left the GOP in May 2001, but nobody knew that in January. Instead, Democrats acted on the possibility—the hope?—that South Carolina's Strom Thurmond, then 98 years old, would not survive the 107th Congress. If Thurmond died, his replacement would be chosen by South Carolina's Democratic governor, putting Democrats in power.

So when the Senate first got together

UNHAPPY ANNIVERSARY

Fifty Years Since Roth v. United States

The National Tragedy of the Supreme Court's Misjudgment on Obscenity

by Daniel Mark Cohen

"[W]ithout virtue, there can be no political liberty . . ." -John Adams

The year 2007 marks the fiftieth anniversary of the Supreme Court's decision in Roth v. United States, the landmark case in which America's highest judicial body determined that "obscenity" is not protected by the Constitution, but that nothing is obscene unless a proxy representative of the community is moved to deem it so. Even more striking, as a necessary, underlying premise to the opinion, the Court tacitly endorsed an astounding proposition: that photographs of women engaged in acts of prostitution, absent fulfillment of an elusive legal standard, constitute a form of speech entitled to protection by the First Amendment.

It is only now, fifty years later, with the astonishing invention of the Internet, the universal establishment of the personal computer, and daily, unimpeded access to the Internet by America's children, that one can begin to glimpse the apocalyptic consequences of the Supreme Court's woeful and spectacular misjudgment in Roth. The Supreme Court's ruling in 1957, and the legal progeny wrought therefrom, has precipitated a national spiritual decline in this country, subtle in form and glacial in pace to be sure, but inexorable, and one that, undiscerned, threatens to bring about the collapse of these, the former United Colonies, now the United States. . . .

"Can it be, that Providence has not connected the permanent felicity of a Nation with its virtue?" -George Washington

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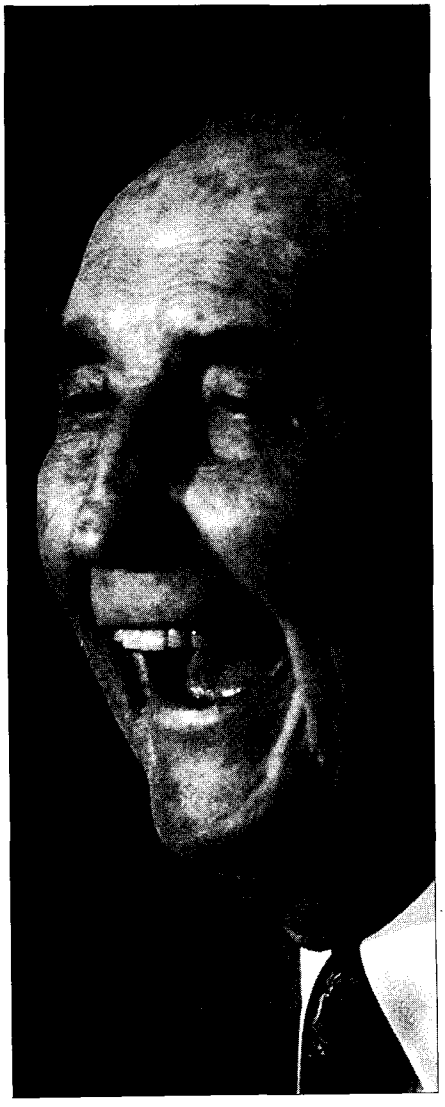
in January 2001, Democrats insisted on placing a special provision in the rules. Their agreement with Republicans called for Senate committees to be split 50–50 between the parties, with the GOP holding the chairmanships. But the rules of the Senate, once made at the beginning of a new Congress, usually stay in place for two years. Knowing Thurmond's health—there were also eyes on North Carolina's Jesse Helms, then 79 and not doing well—Democrats came up with the following clause: "Such committee ratios shall remain in effect for the remainder of the 107th Congress, except that if at any time during the 107th Congress either party attains a majority of the whole number of senators, then each committee ratio shall be adjusted to reflect the ratio of the parties in the Senate . . . and the committee chairmanships shall be held by the party which has attained a majority of the whole number of senators." Under the arrangement, if a Republican died—there weren't any Democrats on the death watch at the time—the turnover to Democratic control would be quick and clean.

Party supporters in the press got the message. "If Democrats, who control no branch of the federal government, seem oddly complacent these days, it may be because they believe they're holding an ace in the hole," wrote Slate editor Jacob Weisberg in March 2001. "Their secret weapon is the grim reaper." "Is it in bad taste to talk about the death of Strom Thurmond before he has actually died?" asked *The Nation*'s William Greider. "Probably, but hey, everyone in the Washington power corridors seems to be talking about it." (Such talk was spurred on by a *New York Times* story headlined "A Hushed but Vital Issue: Thurmond's Health.")

Compare that with statements in the conservative opinion press after Johnson fell ill. Everyone should "lay off" speculation about Johnson, National Review Online wrote in an editorial on December 15. "We would rather see a healthy Senator Johnson, and the Senate in Democratic hands, than an ill Senator Johnson and the Senate controlled by the GOP." Republicans and their supporters simply didn't want to entertain the idea of a changed Senate.

Those sentiments apparently extended to the Republican leadership as well. In late December and early January, when the new Senate was organizing itself under Democratic control, Republicans did not insist on a provision like the one Democrats fought for in 2001. They did briefly consider it—in fact, some Republicans discussed the issue *before* Johnson fell ill, when Sen. Joseph Lieberman won reelection as an "Independent Democrat" and declined to say definitively that he would always stay in the Democratic party. But few believed Lieberman would switch, and nobody wanted to talk about Johnson. So there was no Republican support for putting a 2001-style clause in the rules.

"We didn't do what they did in '01," says a leadership source. "You'd have Republicans in the position of saying, 'Hey, we think Tim Johnson is going to die any day now.'" If they violated the taboo, GOP leaders felt sure they would be pilloried by Democrats and the press. "They'd say, 'There's a senator in the hospital, and all Republicans are thinking about is how to get power back—after the American people spoke,'" says the source.



SCOTT J. FERRELL/*CONGRESSIONAL QUARTERLY*

Strom was hard to stop.

So there is no clause. What would that mean if Johnson were to die, or Lieberman were to defect? The GOP leadership source argues that Republicans would still take over, even without a specific provision. "You can at any time in a Congress—at any time—say, 'We're submitting this new committee slate that says Arlen Specter is chairman of the Judiciary Committee, and Charles Grassley is chairman of the Finance Committee, and so on," the source says. He concedes that Democrats might try to block such a move. But should that occur, the aide says, the Republican majority would prevail. "We would destroy them—it just wouldn't stand."

In the long term, he's right; if Republicans became the majority, they could ultimately force Democrats to give up control. But, unlike 2001, it probably wouldn't be quick, and it wouldn't be clean. "At some point, the Democrats would have to make an accommodation," says a Republican veteran of the 2001 Senate fight. "It's a question of how quickly they would make an accommodation and what concessions they could get Republicans to make in exchange for it." In other words, Democrats would likely extract a price—power-sharing arrangements, better representation on committees—to hand over power to Republicans without a time-consuming and messy fight.

Of course, no one knows what will happen. In the end, Strom Thurmond made it until the end of his term, and Jesse Helms, although no longer in the Senate, is with us still. Nevertheless, a number of observers believe Democrats were smart to insist on a measure providing for an orderly turnover of Senate power, and Republicans were not so smart in failing to do so. Yes, death and debilitating illness are unpleasant topics. And none of us, whatever his age, knows when his time will come. But we all make plans for that eventuality. All of us, save Senate Republicans. **NR**

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■ THE NATION

Michigan And Beyond

Ward Connerly keeps after race preferences

JOHN J. MILLER

GERALD FORD had been dead for just a day when the University of Michigan issued its official statement of mourning. President Mary Sue Coleman used the occasion not only to lament the loss of the man who is her school's best-known alumnus, but also to score an ideological point: "In recent years, and perhaps most importantly, President Ford was outspoken in his support for our diversity programs through our defense of affirmative action to the Supreme Court."

Perhaps most importantly? The University of Michigan is home to the Gerald R. Ford School of Public Policy and the Gerald R. Ford Presidential Library. But, in the mind of Coleman, these permanent presences pale in comparison with Ford's endorsement of racial preferences. Or perhaps she simply wanted to exploit the news of Ford's death to continue fighting what suddenly has become a losing battle for Ann Arbor's bean counters.

The university's defeat, coming at the hands of voters who overwhelmingly approved the Michigan Civil Rights Initiative in November, represents an astonishing victory for conservatives. It's a success story that upends the conventional wisdom of just three years ago, when it looked like racial preferences would survive far into the future. Today they are in jeopardy as never before.

By the end of the 1990s, opponents of racial preferences were on a roll. Inspired by Ward Connerly, voters in California and Washington passed ballot initiatives banning the consideration of race in public contracting, employment, and education. Judges were increasingly inclined to restrict the government's use of preferences, and federal rulings essentially eliminated them at the University of Texas and the University of Georgia. When the Supreme Court agreed to consider a pair of cases involving the University of Michigan, conservatives were hopeful that the justices would deliver a death blow.

Instead, they tossed out a lifeline. Sandra Day O'Connor wrote the majority opinion: "The Court expects that 25 years from now, the use of racial preferences will no longer be necessary." In other words, color-coded admissions had the high court's seal of approval for another generation. "That ruling alarmed me," says Connerly. "There were moments when I really thought about packing it in."

There had been other setbacks as well. In 2000, a Connerly-led referendum in Florida failed to qualify for the ballot. (Yet it may have succeeded in prompting Gov. Jeb Bush to phase out preferences in state universities.) Three years later, Connerly's Racial Privacy Initiative, which sought to ban all racial classifications by the California government, lost badly at the polls. The drive to enact colorblind public policies seemed to have run out of gas. When Connerly announced his intention to launch the MCRI, some of his allies harbored strong doubts: "I didn't think he could win, and I knew we couldn't afford another defeat," says Abigail Thernstrom of the Manhattan Institute.

A victory in Michigan promised to bring with it enormous symbolic value because of the Supreme Court cases, but it was also a risky move: The state leans blue and national trends suggested that conservative turnout would be down in 2006. What's more, virtually every member of the state establishment denounced the effort: Democratic and Republican officeholders, business leaders, labor bosses, pastors, and so on. "They claimed that breast-cancer-screening centers would be shut down and domestic-violence shelters would be challenged. They even had a radio ad that compared passage of the MCRI to the tragedies of 9/11 and Hurricane Katrina," says Jennifer Gratz, the campaign's executive director (and a plaintiff in one of the Supreme Court's Michigan cases). These oppo-

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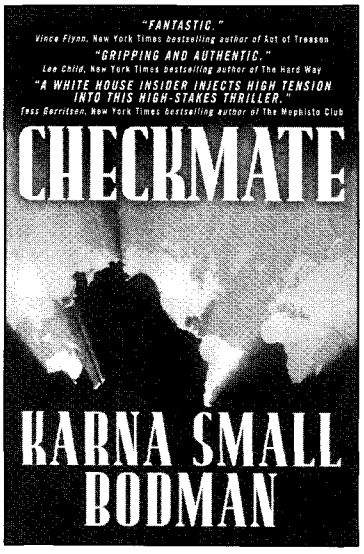
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nents outspent Connerly, Gratz, and their allies by a factor of at least three. A state election board altered the ballot language in an unhelpful way. By the summer, polls suggested that support for the initiative had slipped beneath the all-important 50-percent threshold. A day before the election, the Evans-Novak Political Report predicted that it would "fail by a large margin."

Instead it won big: 58 percent to 42. The next day, Michigan president Coleman spoke at a campus rally. "There are serious questions as to whether this initiative is lawful," she said. Perhaps she should have checked in with the professors at her own top-ranked law school: Although liberal civil-rights groups have filed suit against the new law, there's really no serious question about its constitutionality. Indeed, when the University of Michigan sought to delay the implementation of the MCRI until this summer so that it could use a consistent standard for admitting next year's class of students—a request that even some MCRI supporters considered reasonable—a federal appeals panel objected.

Bureaucrats in Ann Arbor aren't the only ones trying to resist the new law. The state government in Lansing, under reelected Democratic governor Jennifer Granholm, has ordered a review of programs but doesn't appear to be in any hurry to comply. The City of Detroit says it won't even do that much: It continues to insist that blacks, who compose more than 80 percent of the population, would suffer from racism if they didn't have set-asides and other preferences. Elsewhere, however, the MCRI has started to have an impact. At Grand Valley State University in Grand Rapids, for example, administrators are abolishing a minority-only scholarship.

Before the passage of the MCRI, the struggle against racial preferences had not screeched to a complete halt. Since 2002, the Center for Equal Opportunity (CEO) has helped eliminate racial exclusivity in more than 150 programs at colleges and universities around the country, including Princeton, MIT, and the University of Colorado. Last year, at the urging of CEO, the Department of Justice cracked down on a graduate-student program at Southern Illinois University that excluded whites. The Center for Individual Rights, which has defended the MCRI in court, is also suing Virginia Commonwealth University for holding a no-whites-allowed summer journalism program.

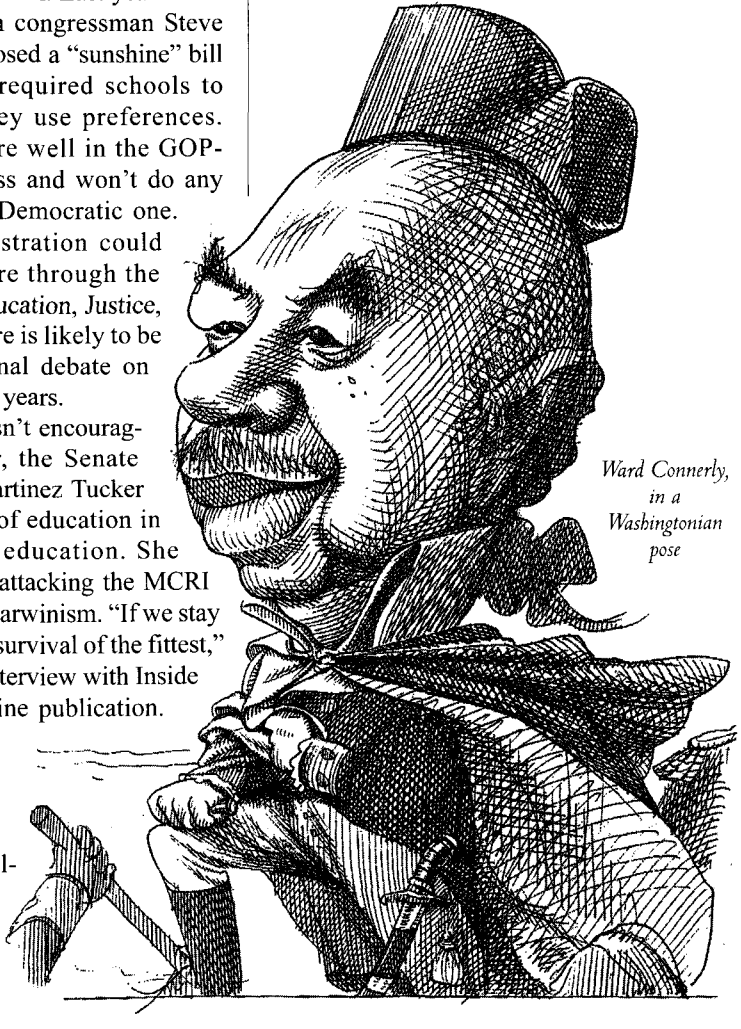
Far more important than any of these individual advances, however, are a pair of cases now before the Supreme Court involving K–12 education. The public school systems in Louisville and Seattle are defending their use of race-based policies—not, they claim, because they want to compensate for past discrimination, but because "diversity" is such an important goal that governments must be allowed to sort children by their skin color. This is essentially what the University of Michigan said in defense of its admissions policies three years ago, and the Supreme Court bought it. Yet with Samuel Alito replacing O'Connor on the bench, there is good reason to believe that this time the outcome will be different.

Looking forward, the role of the federal government in the fight against racial preferences is uncertain. Last year in the House, Republican congressman Steve King of Iowa proposed a "sunshine" bill that would have required schools to report on how they use preferences. The bill didn't fare well in the GOP-controlled Congress and won't do any better in the new Democratic one. The Bush administration could still apply pressure through the Departments of Education, Justice, and Labor, and there is likely to be considerable internal debate on this in the next two years.

One early sign isn't encouraging: In December, the Senate confirmed Sara Martinez Tucker as undersecretary of education in charge of higher education. She wasted no time in attacking the MCRI as a tool of social Darwinism. "If we stay with Connerly, it's survival of the fittest," she warned in an interview with Inside Higher Ed, an online publication. Tucker went on to claim that "the Connerly approach" would cut minority enrollment in universities by half. Since California eliminated preferences a decade ago, however, minority enrollment in the UC system has actually increased.

The primary battleground over preferences is likely to remain in the states. "The 25-year aspiration of Sandra Day O'Connor is going to be abbreviated considerably," says Connerly. "We just moved the ball from our own 30-yard line to our opponents' 20-yard line." Connerly is now talking about sponsoring what he calls a "Super Tuesday for Equality"—simultaneous ballot initiatives in several states, all on November 4, 2008. Since the MCRI's victory, Connerly has traveled to Colorado, Nevada, Oregon, and Wyoming to meet with local activists. He also plans to look at Arizona, Missouri, Nebraska, South Dakota, and Utah. "We are more likely than not to prevail anywhere we go," he says. "The last chapter in the story of racial preferences is being written right now."

May they rest in peace. **NR**



ROMAN GENN

Ward Connerly, in a Washingtonian pose

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ACTUAL LETTER FROM A COLLEGE GRADUATE TO HIS MOTHER CONCERNING LEGAL AND ILLEGAL DRUG USE*

November 15, 2006

Dear Mom,

It has been eight years since I entered high school on the heels of your famous advice about drugs: "Johnny – be skeptical and, most of all, be safe." Although I'd like to tell you that I never needed your advice because I never encountered drugs, I'd prefer to be as honest with you as you have been with me

Just as you predicted, I spent high school and college navigating a highly experimental teenage drug culture. While some of the substances that I encountered were illegal, like marijuana, cocaine, and Ecstasy, many were not, like alcohol, cigarettes, and Ritalin. Because you explained that a drug's legality does not mean that it is better or worse for me, I approached every substance with skepticism, moderation and common sense.

Our household mantra of 'safety first' guided me through a maze of difficult decisions, particularly in college where alcohol use and abuse is widespread. Because you didn't lie or exaggerate the risks of drug use, I took your warnings seriously. I always made plans for sober transportation; I refused to leave friends alone if they were highly intoxicated; and I was never afraid to call home if I found myself in a dangerous situation.

Of course you advised me not to use drugs, but as an expert in the field, you knew that I was likely to experiment. Most parents panic in response to this likelihood, but you and Dad remained levelheaded: You didn't impose rigid rules that were bound to be broken, and you didn't bombard me with transparent scare tactics. Instead you encouraged me to think critically and carefully about drug use. When I inquired, you armed me with truthful, scientifically based information from which I could make my own decisions. This was excellent practice for adulthood, and we built a loving relationship based on trust and truth.

Mom, your work does so much more than teach parents how to talk to their kids about drugs; your work keeps parents and kids communicating at a time when most kids shut their parents out. Our relationship is a perfect example. For never ceasing to communicate with me, even when I tried to shut the door on you, and for tirelessly keeping me, my sisters, and so many other kids safe, thank you.

Common Sense for Drug Policy
www.CommonSenseDrugPolicy.org www.DrugWarFacts.org
www.ManagingChronicPain.org www.MedicalMJ.org
www.TreatingDrugAddiction.org
info@csdp.org

* Above is an unedited, unsolicited letter to Marsha Rosenbaum, Ph.D. from her son John.

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■ THE EX-PRESIDENCY

The Question Of Carter's Cash

In which our reporter follows the money

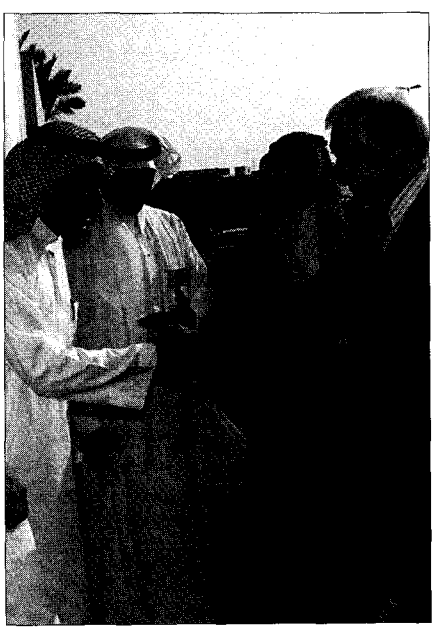
CLAUDIA ROSETT

Did Jimmy Carter do it for the money? That's the question making the rounds about *Palestine: Peace Not Apartheid*, an anti-Israeli screed recently written by the ex-president whose Carter Center has accepted millions in Arab funding.

Even in Carter's long history of post-presidential grandstanding, this book sets fresh standards of irresponsibility. Purporting to give a balanced view of the Palestinian–Israeli conflict, Carter effectively shrugs off such highly germane matters as Palestinian terrorism. The hypocrisies are boundless, and include adoring praise of the deeply oppressive, religiously intolerant Saudi regime side by side with condemnations of democratic Israel. In one section, typical of the book's entire approach, Carter includes a "Historical Chronology," from Biblical times to 2006, in which he dwells on events surrounding his 1978 Camp David Accords but omits the Holocaust. Kenneth W. Stein, the founder of the Carter Center's Middle East program, resigned last month to protest the book, describing it in a letter to Fox News as "replete with factual errors, copied materials not cited, superficialities, glaring omissions, and simply invented segments." As this article goes to press, more protest resignations, this time from the Carter Center's board of councilors, appear to be in the works.

If there is a silver lining to any of this, it is that Carter's book has drawn much-overdue attention to some of the funding that pours into the Carter Center, whose intriguing donor list includes anti-Israeli tycoons and Middle East states. Founded in 1982 and appended to Carter's presidential library, the center has served for almost a quarter century as the main base and fund-raising magnet for Carter's self-proclaimed mission to save the world.

In recent weeks, a number of articles have noted that Carter's anti-Israeli views coincide with those of some of the center's prime financial backers, including the government of Saudi Arabia and the foundation of Saudi prince Alwaleed bin Talal bin Abdul Aziz al-Saud, whose offer of $10 million to New York City just after Sept. 11 was rejected by then-mayor Rudy Giuliani because it came wrapped in the suggestion that America rethink its support of Israel. Other big donors listed in the Carter Center's annual reports include the Sultanate of Oman and the sultan himself; the government of the United Arab Emirates; and a brother of Osama bin Laden, Bakr BinLadin, "for the Saudi BinLadin Group." Of lesser heft, but still large, are contributions from assorted development funds of Saudi Arabia and Kuwait, as well as of OPEC, whose membership includes oil-rich Arab states, Nigeria (whose government is also a big donor to the Carter Center), and Venezuela (whose anti-American strongman Hugo Chávez benefited in a 2004 election from the highly controversial monitoring efforts of the Carter Center).



2001

AFP

A recent editorial in *Investor's Business Daily*, headlined "Jimmy Carter's Li'l Ol' Stink Tank," listed a number of "founders" of the Carter Center. The names were drawn from the annual reports, and included "the king of Saudi Arabia, BCCI scandal banker Agha Hasan Abedi, and Arafat pal Hasib Sabbagh." And, writing last month in the *Washington Times*, terror-funding expert Rachel Ehrenfeld described links going back to the 1970s between the Carter family peanut business and the Bank of Credit and Commerce International, whose Pakistani founder helped bankroll the Carter Center at least until BCCI went belly-up in 1991, busted as a global criminal enterprise.

There is, of course, much more to the Carter Center than this list implies. It is large, with assets totaling $377 million (as of 2005), an operating budget of some $46.8 million, a staff of some 150, a 200-member board of councilors, and hundreds of donors, including not only individuals and foundations, but the U.S. Agency for International Development and the U.S. State Department. Some of the center's work is devoted to such laudable causes as wiping out the parasitical guinea worm. Indeed, it is possible to glean from various news items and brief mentions in the center's annual reports that some of the more intriguing donors, such as the sultan of Oman and the OPEC development fund, have been giving money for exactly such causes. According to one notation on the Carter Center website, for example, King Fahd of Saudi Arabia donated $7.6 million in 1993 to help Carter fight the guinea worm.

But notwithstanding such occasional tidbits, it's stunningly hard to discern from the Carter Center's public documents who is giving precisely how much, and for what. Donor names, sometimes listed only as "Anonymous," are lumped under broad categories such as "$100,000 or more" or "$1 million or more." There is no systematic tally of just how much "more"—no clear way to know, for example, whether Saudi money accounts for only a tad of Carter's funding or a mighty dollop, and whether the Saudi share of total contributions has changed over the years. Neither is there any systematic dis-

Claudia Rosett is a journalist-in-residence with the Foundation for Defense of Democracies.

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closure of who is funding exactly what activities in the name of "waging peace," "fighting disease," and "building hope"—the center's self-proclaimed missions. A reporter's e-mail exchange with Carter Center press secretary Deanna Congileo elicits the response that none of the anonymous donors are from the Middle East, but no further details can be released without permission from the donors—which, even if granted, will take some time to obtain (stay tuned).

All this might be less disturbing had Carter confined his post-presidential efforts to such good works as vanquishing the guinea worm. But for years he has run his own mini-presidency—complete with a series of attempts to outflank or shape the policies of sitting presidents. These have included—to name just two examples—his letter-writing campaign in 1990 to members of the United Nations Security Council, in an effort to thwart the Bush I coalition that fought the first Gulf War against Saddam Hussein; and his 1994 trip to North Korea, where he proposed to the dying tyrant Kim Il Sung a deeply flawed nuclear-freeze deal that may well have helped Kim's son consolidate power and develop ICBMs and atomic bombs.

It could be argued that Carter, whatever his pretensions, is, after all, a private individual running a private foundation, and is therefore under no obligation to disclose full details of the getting and spending of the river of money flowing through his center. (In 2004, the most recent year for which the center's website makes such figures available, donations totaled $146 million.) But in all his waging and fighting and building (and fundraising), Carter has been trading for years on the respect accorded to his former public office. Regardless of whatever room for murk the law allows, full financial disclosure is what sound judgment demands. The Carter Center itself makes much in promotional materials of its efforts to strengthen democracies by "promoting government transparency." Is Carter so rigidly certain of his rectitude that he believes himself exempt from his own preaching?

In a recent *Los Angeles Times* opinion piece defending his new book (and insinuating that the debate over it is being controlled by pro-Israeli lobbyists), Carter wrote that he is merely seeking a "free and balanced discussion of the facts." It is quite possible that even he may not know for sure whether he has molded his views to suit anti-Israeli donors; whether his center has attracted the money of such donors because they like his views; or whether, while fighting the guinea worm, he simply made the unrelated mistake of writing an appallingly biased and bad book. But having parlayed his former public office into global influence, he owes the public at least this much: Tell us, clearly and directly, enough about your supporters and their money that we can, with full information, decide for ourselves what is going on. **NR**

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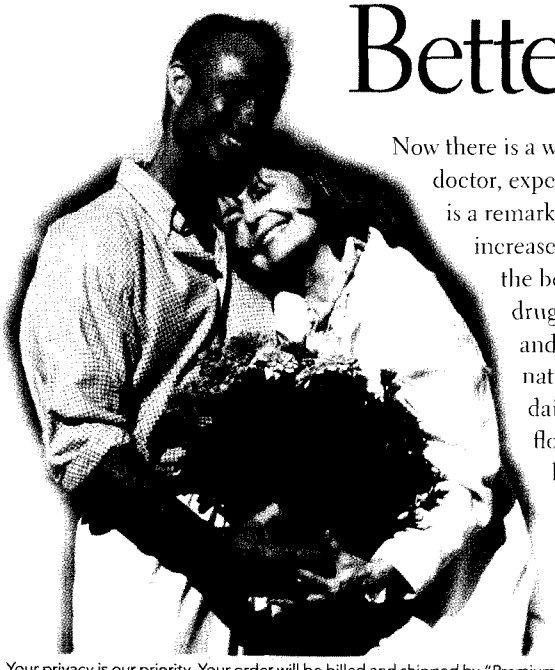

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■ CULTURE WATCH

Bassackwards

Construction Spanish and other signs of the times

JAY NORDLINGER

AMERICA, of course, has always been a place of many languages, along with our common tongue, English. German, its cousin Yiddish, Chinese, Italian, Polish—they have all been spoken here, especially in homes and community centers. But Spanish in today's America is something else: a language coddled, bowed to, enshrined.

We could talk about "bilingual education," which too often turns out to be monolingual education, and in the wrong tongue. We could talk about Spanish-language election ballots. We could talk about "For English, press 1. *Para español, oprima el dos.*" But let's talk, instead, about Construction Spanish.

Classes in—shall we call it "Con. Span."?—have sprouted up all over America. These are classes designed to teach contractors, supervisors, and other bosses in the construction business how to speak to their Hispanic workers. The bosses aren't learning Spanish, exactly; they will not be reading *Don Quixote*. This is a specialized language: *casco* for hard hat; *montacarga* for forklift; *pistola de clavos* for nail gun.

But wouldn't it be better, for all concerned, if the workers learned "hard hat," "forklift," and "nail gun"? We must put off such foolish questions, for the moment.

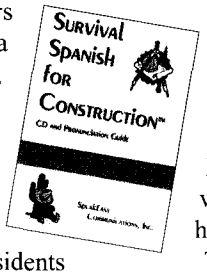
Construction Spanish is an example of what has been called "Survival Spanish," or "Command Spanish"—bits of Spanish acquired for a specific purpose. You can get trained in Restaurant Spanish, Fireman Spanish, or Health Care Spanish. And this last Spanish has sub-branches, such as Dental Spanish and Physical Therapy Spanish. Also, you can buy books and tapes that tell you how to converse with your gardener or maid, if that is your need.

But Construction Spanish has loomed especially large lately, for an obvious reason: the predominance of Hispanics in that field. Go into a Lowe's or Home Depot—stores that sell building materials—and you will see signs in Spanish (quite naturally). And you can buy any number of glossaries or handbooks. My favorite is *Spanish on the Job*, for its ad copy:

> No previous knowledge of Spanish is necessary. All words are phonetically spelled out to assure correct pronunciation. Trust me, yelling in English isn't going to help.

Let me yell, just a little bit. The old deal was, you came to America and you assimilated into the culture. You presumably wanted to, otherwise you wouldn't have immigrated. You retained your mother tongue, of course, and you figured your children would know it, and you hoped your grandchildren would be interested (although that was no guarantee). But you were in America, and America included English. Hooray!

And what of now? Forgetting an immigrant mindset, what is the general American mindset? An article published in the *Washington Post* a few years ago shed some light. It concerned a Northern Virginia county, Fairfax, which had trained 450 of its employees in Spanish. A Fairfax official explained, "As we saw the changing demographics of the county, we said, 'How are we responding to the needs of new residents of the county?'" Not by encouraging their assimilation, that's for sure.



Hispanic immigrants had joined the sanitation department, so an assistant superintendent there took Spanish for Garbage Workers. (Really.) He said, "In our type of business, it's something we're gonna have to learn." It was not too long ago that immigrants thought English was something they had to learn. They did not expect their employers or supervisors to take Survival Polish or Survival Serbian; they saw to it that they acquired some Survival English.

The *Post*'s reporter found one person, a middle-aged "supervisor on building projects in downtown Washington," who was not too happy about the new order. He acknowledged to the reporter that he wished his workers would simply learn English. But they were not—so he enrolled in Construction Spanish. "I'm not saying I like what's happening," he said. "But I figure I can't fight it."

Which is a near-perfect expression of cultural defeatism.

There is always a tug between the pragmatic and the idealistic, or the short term and the long term. You want assimilation and acculturation; but you also want to do business in the here and now, in whatever language. You want to be considerate of the immigrant, who has enough challenges, without a new language; but you are not pleased to see him trapped in a linguistic ghetto—barrio-ization, some people have called it.

I consider myself a veteran of the Spanish wars, although I participated in the most minor of ways. Years ago, I was working at a firm in Washington, D.C. We were told that, when we wanted boxes thrown away, we had to mark them "BASURA." *Basura* is the Spanish word for *trash*. And all of our janitors were Hispanic.

Everything in my traditional-American soul rebelled at writing "BASURA," thinking it a gross act of separatism, and probably an insult to the workers. "Why don't we write 'TRASH'?" I asked. "We're in America, and we don't want anyone walled off. We want them to join the American family. How will they ever rise in our society if they don't learn English? In Guatemala, we would write 'BASURA.' But here we write 'TRASH.'"

That didn't go over terribly well, and I made no headway. But I took to writing "BASURA/TRASH" on my boxes to be thrown out. That was my pathetic little stand: a word, a slash, and another word. But I liked it.

A while back, I wrote about this experience in a National Review Online column, and the subject provoked a ton of mail. I seemed to have touched some national nerve. Many Hispanics wrote of their frustration and resentment at having been shunted into Spanish-only classes, or "bilingual" classes that were the usual Spanish-preservation rackets. And a former manager of custodial crews in Phoenix wrote the following:

> I once spent a few months trying to convince people in the corporate offices of a major insurance company that my employees didn't need orders in Spanish. They may have been willing to do menial labor, but that didn't mean that they were stupid, and it was condescending to think

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they couldn't learn a simple five-letter word in the English language.

Namely, "trash."

Another correspondent added a twist, saying, "Here in Chicago, the big offices distribute stickers to be placed on garbage items. They read, 'GARBAGE/BASURA/SMIECI,'" laying it out in English, Spanish, and Polish.

Still another reader contributed this:

> An acquaintance once told me that, years ago, when he was preparing for a job that involved supervising an office cleaning crew, the guy he was replacing suggested that he come in a half-hour early each day of the following week so he could learn enough Spanish to deal with the crew. The new guy replied: "I've got a better idea: Why don't you have them come in a half-hour early each day to learn enough English to deal with me?"

A stirring protest against the ass-backwardness of contemporary American life.

At that Washington firm, a young janitor and I became friends, and I learned that he had no dictionary: no English-Spanish, Spanish-English dictionary. I got him one. That night, he left me a note that contained one word: "Grasias." Mainly because of the misspelling, I'm sure, it was one of the most touching notes I had ever received.

Yet I am under no illusion that everyone who comes to America is dying to melt into the pot. Is aching to bear out the national motto, *E pluribus unum*. Years before I worked at the Washington firm, I worked at a public golf course in Michigan, and we had many leagues, one of which was "the Korean League." I was appalled at this, mortified for those good Americans of Korean origin who played every Wednesday afternoon.

So, brimming with idealism, I said to the leader of the group, "We should call it the Korean-American League or something else, right? Because you are fellow Americans, and it's not right to call it the Korean League." He looked at me blankly and said, "No, we're Koreans." Oh.

In any case, I tried—and so should all Americans, I dare say (native and immigrant alike). Of course, when you talk as I have, in this piece, someone always accuses you of being a jingo, boob, or xenophobe. People who can't find their way to the toilet in any European capital will paint you as a foe of languages. Will say that you're "afraid of the Other."

This even happened to S. I. Hayakawa, the famed linguist and politician. He was the fellow who founded U.S. English, the lobbying group. Hayakawa liked to say, "Bilingualism for the individual is fine, but not for a country." I imagine he spoke more languages than most people have toes. Yet that did not spare him the usual accusations.

I assure the reader that I like Spanish as much as the next guy—actually, considerably more. And Con. Span., Dental Span., and all the rest of the Spans. are hardly the worst threat we face. Moreover, I trust that Americanization will sometime kick in, for the masses of newly arrived Hispanics. But if it doesn't, we will lose a lot—all of us will. **NR**

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Do or Die in Iraq

Where we've been; where we should go

BING WEST

IT is difficult to determine precisely what is new about President Bush's new strategy toward Iraq. Exhortations about lowering unemployment, sharing oil revenues, and reconciling with the Sunnis are already part of the strategic repertoire of Gen. George W. Casey Jr., who is being replaced as commander of coalition forces in Iraq.

What are the additional American soldiers expected to do? Increasing their numbers is a temporary input. Every surge ebbs. Keeping U.S. forces in very large numbers in Iraq is an approach that probably can't be sustained for longer than a year. We are simply running out of time in Iraq, because the American public has already seen our soldiers dying for almost four years, without progress. Economic incentives, meanwhile, of the kind that alter people's perceptions and draw support away from the insurgents, require multiyear persistence. Political reconciliation requires refractory Iraqi politicians to reach reasonable compromise—again, a multiyear task.

Strategy in Washington is only tenuously connected to the realities of the violence in Iraq. The U.S. manages crises from the top down: The White House, the diplomats, and the generals seek to motivate Iraq's political leaders, who will presumably cajole the shadowy leaders of the Sunni insurgency and the Shiite militias. This is the model of the Washington policymaker: Power speaks to power, based on rank. Our best and brightest will craft a strategy calculated to persuade Nouri al-Maliki, the prime minister of Iraq, who putatively influences those below him.

The insurgents and the death squads, on the other hand, have no such hierarchical pyramid. An insurgency grows from the bottom up. A guerrilla who doesn't know his neighborhood stands out as though he were wearing a uniform. Indeed, if the insurgents did wear uniforms, the war would be over in a week. A few years ago, when Qaeda leader Abu Musab al-Zarqawi bumped into a checkpoint near Ramadi, he asked his driver what tribe controlled the area. He then leaped from his car and escaped via a local contact. Only later did our intelligence cells in Baghdad learn what had happened in that remote city. Insurgent militias survive by putting down local roots.

To put it bluntly, the philosophical convictions of 60-year-old executives have no point of contact with the tribal nihilism of the 20-year-old killers embedded like ticks in local villages and city neighborhoods. The latter don't give a tinker's damn what the Gucci politicians cluck about in Baghdad. Maliki, coddled in the Green Zone, is a party politician installed by American force of arms. Unlike our Founding Fathers, he and his ilk were handed a democracy they did not fight to establish. The streets outside the Green Zone are controlled by their enemies: killers whose souls have been corroded, and who will continue to murder, because that's what they do. They're not going to be won over by jobs cleaning streets or promises of oil-revenue sharing. Like the mafia, they have tasted power and they're not giving it back. They have to be put down, in jail or in the earth.

That's the role of our soldiers. They're the ones out on the streets. Putting aside the economics and the politics, what is "new" about what *they* will be told to do? The starting point is to examine where we stand today, and how we got there.

THE MAKING OF A MESS

Our military troubles began in May 2003, when Gen. Tommy Franks, the overall commander in the region, applauded the president's decision to fire Franks's deputy in Iraq, Lt. Gen. Jay Garner, and to appoint L. Paul Bremer to administer Iraq in his stead. The White House gave Bremer control over the mission, structure, and budget for Iraqi security forces, while Central Command remained responsible for security until the Iraqis were ready to take over. Thus President Bush, cheered on by General Franks, abolished the core principle of unity of command in war. Bremer brusquely dissolved the Iraqi army, dismissed most Baathist officials, and antagonized both the Iraqis and the U.S. military at all levels.

In July 2003, Gen. John Abizaid, who had taken over regional command after Franks retired, declared that Iraq was in the throes of an insurgency. But Abizaid permitted his deputy in Iraq, Lt. Gen. Ricardo Sanchez, to persist with offensive operations that alienated the population and contradicted the basic tenets of counterinsurgency.

Iraq boiled over in April 2004. The president, angered by the horrific pictures of the lynching of four American contractors in Fallujah, ordered the Marines, against their advice, to assault the city. At the same time, Bremer moved to arrest a deputy to the radical Moqtada al-Sadr, who then told his Mahdi Army militia to rebel. Thus the Americans ended up fighting both Sunnis and Shiites.

Mr. West, a former Marine and former assistant secretary of defense, has accompanied more than 30 U.S. and Iraqi battalions on operations over the past four years and has written two books about the combat.

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The Unrelenting and Virulent Hatred of the Arabs

Will peace ever be possible under those conditions?

After almost sixty years of statehood, Israel is a lone outpost of Western civilization and its values. It is the staunchest ally of the United States in that part of the world – a bulwark of democracy. The Arab nations surrounding it are a swamp of terrorism, corruption, dictatorship, and human enslavement. But the hatred of the Arabs against Israel and against all Jews is so abiding and so virulent that peace, at least for the foreseeable future, seems unattainable and most unlikely.

What are the facts?

No "sacrifice" will overcome the hatred. There are those who still believe that the never-ending conflict between the Arabs and the Jews could be settled if the Israelis were willing to bring greater "sacrifices for peace." Such "sacrifices" would include relinquishing ever-larger portions of their tiny country (less than half the size of San Bernardino County in California) to the Palestinians, dismantling the "settlements" in Judea/Samaria (the "West Bank"), handing the Golan Heights to Syria , and allowing the "return of the refugees," a group that has grown miraculously from about 500,000 to somewhere around 5 million – and the absorption of even a substantial fraction of which would signify the demographic end of the Jewish states.

> "Israel's only course...is to assume its previous stance of unflinching deterrence...and not to be inhibited... to preempt resolutely if it appears necessary to assure survival of the country."

After the bloody intifada, Israel, ill-advisedly, vacated Gaza. It was rewarded with killing and kidnapping of its soldiers and by daily barrages of Qassam rockets. In the north, after Israel had abandoned its southern Lebanon buffer zone, Hizbollah (the "Army of God") launched the second "Lebanon War." It must now be clear to even the most confirmed "doves" that nothing that Israel could do, any further "sacrifice" that Israel would be prepared to bring, would satisfy the Arabs.The sad but irrefutable conclusion is that only the complete disappearance of Israel, its annihilation, its being "wiped off the map," the excision of this "cancer" could satisfy the Arabs and most of the Muslim world.

Mortal hatred and the "Big Lie." The "Big Lie," invented by the notorious Joseph Goebbels of Nazi infamy, is a mainstay of Arab hatred and propaganda. In Egypt and Jordan (the two Arab countries technically at peace with Israel), government-controlled news sources published that Israel had distributed drug-laced chewing gum and candy to kill children and to make women sexually corrupt. The Jews (Israelis) are being accused of having introduced foot-and-mouth disease in the Middle East. The age-old calumny of Jews using the blood of Christian and Muslim children in order to bake their Passover matzos is alive and well in Arab publications. Translations of Adolf Hitler's "Mein Kampf" and the "Protocols of the Elders of Zion" are steady best-sellers in all Arab countries. Among other malevolent fabrications, it accuses "international Jewry" of "limitless ambition, inexhaustible greed, and hatred beyond imagination."

In the controlled Arab press, Holocaust denial and accusation of the Zionists having been in cahoots with the German Nazis are regular features. Egypt's government-sponsored Al Akhbar newspaper has expressed fervent thanks to Adolf Hitler for having taken advance revenge on the "vilest criminals on the face of the earth." Still, it berated him for not having been thorough enough in his task of extermination. The Arabs do not consider Israel a normal country, but a creation of the devil, an excrescence, a malignant force of aggressors, murderers, infidels and barbarians. It should be destroyed, for the glory of God, no matter what sacrifices that might entail.

Mortal hatred against Israel and against the Jews is taught to Arab children from the very first grade. Children are encouraged to sacrifice themselves as martyrs and to become suicide bombers and human missiles, with promises that Paradise with unimaginable pleasures awaits those who sacrifice themselves in the holy cause of killing Jews.

This bottomless hatred, a hatred that pervades the Arab world in all strata of society and is incessantly fomented by Arab governments, including those supposed to be "at peace" with Israel, cannot be assuaged by negotiation or by making any further "sacrifices for peace." Nothing will suffice, except the destruction of Israel. The Arab states, having been unable in almost sixty years and in many wars to defeat and exterminate the Jews, are now feverishly arming themselves with "conventional weapons" (easily purchased from the West, including, sad to say, from the United States), and are ardently pursuing the development of weapons of mass annihilation. Just as the suicide bombers do not vacillate to sacrifice themselves, one can safely expect that, once in possession of such weapons, the Arabs will not hesitate to sacrifice millions of their own people in order to destroy Israel. Israel's only course in the face of this almost certain prospect is to assume its previous stance of unflinching deterrence and, as it once did in the destruction of the Iraqi atomic reactor at Osirak in 1981, not to be inhibited by "international opinion" to preempt resolutely if it appears necessary to assure survival of the country.

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Several days later, faced with adverse Iraqi political actions, Bremer and Abizaid reversed course. President Bush ordered the astounded Marines to stop, when they were just two days from concluding the battle. When Sadr was trapped in mid-April, the American civilian and military commands could not bring themselves to order him either killed or captured. By the end of April, the Iraqis believed the Americans had lost decisive battles against both the Sunni insurgents and the Shiite radicals.

That was the moment for the president to review the performances of the generals and a military strategy that was in disarray. It didn't happen, because the abuses of Abu Ghraib seized everyone's attention.

In July 2004, after Sanchez had been allowed to operate out of his depth for over a year, Army Gen. George Casey took over. Casey worked collegially first with Ambassador John Negroponte, then with Ambassador Zalmay Khalilzad, and directed a counterinsurgency campaign aimed at clearing and holding key cities, while training an Iraqi army. After wresting control of the police from an incompetent U.S. State Department jealous of its bureaucratic turf, the U.S. military intended to train the wretched Iraqi police by 2006. The effort would be three years too late, but better late than never. Casey envisioned withdrawing U.S. forces in late 2007, as Iraqi forces took over.

That plan was shattered by the cumulative effect of years of mass slaughter of Shiites by Sunni killers. Because the U.S. had not trained and controlled the police and had not removed Sadr before, the Shiite community in Baghdad was dominated by gangs that retaliated by killing and driving out Sunnis. Prime Minister Maliki responded by shielding Sadr and his deputies from arrest by American forces. The U.S. was caught in the worst of worlds: Shiites believed the Americans were aiding the Sunnis, while the Sunni insurgents were killing Americans.

At the end of 2006, the Sunni insurgency was still raging, no insurgent groups had agreed to stop fighting, Sunni insurgents were blowing up innocents in Baghdad, and Shiite death squads were retaliating with a slow but steady ethnic cleansing. The Iraqi army at the battalion level, with American advisers, was progressing, but the ministries in Baghdad were unresponsive. The police in the Sunni Triangle were intimidated, while those in Baghdad were penetrated by the militias and untrustworthy.

General Casey's strategy was based on "standing up" a professional Iraqi army while persuading the Shiite politicians to disarm the Shiite militias and reconcile with the Sunnis. The problem wasn't that the Iraqis couldn't provide better security; it was that they wouldn't. "The longer we in the U.S. forces continue to bear the main burden of Iraq's security, it lengthens the time that the government of Iraq has to take the hard decisions about reconciliation and dealing with the militias," the *New York Times* quoted Casey as saying. "And the other thing is that they can continue to blame us for all of Iraq's problems." Casey's straightforward assessment was similar to that of the Iraq Study Group: He identified senior Iraqi sectarian leaders as the main impediment.

THE BUSH PLAN

Politically, after the defeat in the midterm elections, the president had to take action perceived as drastic. Shifting personnel—Rumsfeld, Abizaid, Casey, and Khalilzad—brought some respite, while requesting more money and sending in more troops signaled resolve. But what was the new *strategy*?

On the surface, it seemed a rebuke of Casey's approach: American soldiers would now do more of the heavy lifting while requiring little of the Iraqi government. The focus would be on Baghdad and its 7 million residents. The political component sought to reassure Maliki and shore up support for him in the National Assembly, while decreasing Sadr's power. Presumably Maliki would then use force against Sadr's militia, while the assembly proffered reconciliation and amnesty terms acceptable to the Sunni "honorable resistance," leaving extremists like al-Qaeda in Iraq isolated.

There were two holes in the strategy. First, we didn't control the strategy; Maliki and other Iraqi politicians did. The president's effort to impose a Western-style democracy depended on a political elite that had proven feckless. His old-new strategy left the U.S. hostage to Maliki, a middling politician. General Abizaid told Congress that by April at the latest, Maliki "will take on the militias" and lead his armed forces. But so far, Maliki has protected Sadr and neglected his own army. The president has been giving Maliki extraordinary reassurances and support, and Maliki may end up seeing the light. In any case, it's a fair bet that by April violence in Baghdad *will* markedly decrease, owing to the determination of American soldiers.

The second hole in the strategy was a neglect of the practicalities of war. Counterinsurgency manuals stress that the proper path to quelling an insurgency is to remove the defects that caused the rebellion and bring security to the people. This approach appeals to American moral instincts: If someone rebels, he must have a reason that can reasonably be addressed. In the Iraq case, on this view, the essential defect in 2003 was proclaiming a democracy that shifted power from Saddam's Baathists to the Shiites. Rescind that power, and the Sunnis will stop killing Americans and Shiites.

Clearly, that's absurd. Yet it has become American military mantra to assert that countering an insurgency is "80 percent non-kinetic"—in other words, what it requires is robust employment, free electric power, decent governance, and political reconciliation. In reality, though, the argument that, e.g., increasing employment will decrease support for the insurgency is based more on hope than on experience. In any case, it is an appropriate task not for the U.S. military, but for the civilian agencies that never showed up in Iraq. As long as our troops are in places like Ramadi and Haditha, they will be seen as the infidels who destroyed houses, killed Sunnis, and handed power to the Shiites. The brave Iraqis who learned pidgin English watching soaps on television and serve as our interpreters consistently say they are outcasts—unable to trust Iraqi soldiers, police, or neighbors, scorned because they are assisting Americans.

Although our generals say they do not want a "Shiite occupying army" inside the Sunni Triangle, that is what exists today and will not be much changed in a year. Yes, the number of Sunni soldiers and police is increasing and some Sunni tribes are moving away from al-Qaeda. But for the next several years, the majority of Iraqi soldiers in the Sunni Triangle will be Shiite, and most Sunnis will resent their presence. Winning hearts and minds takes decades, even centuries. The Catholics in Northern Ireland resented the presence of British soldiers over the decades, regardless of placatory words from Whitehall. Union troops occupied the American South from 1865 to 1877,

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and ushering in racial equality took another century.

In Iraq, the time for the counterinsurgency strategy of "clear, hold, and build" has passed. We are not going to stay in Baghdad and a dozen Sunni cities for four more years in order to build sound economies and governing councils. The U.S. military cannot convert the insurgents or win the allegiance of the Sunni population, no matter how nice we are. As long as we are there, we will be attacked.

Our strategy has lagged a year behind changes on the battlefield. In 2003, we charged to Baghdad, employing fire and maneuver. We persisted with that conventional approach until 2005, giving the insurgency 18 months to grow. Then, too late, we changed to counterinsurgency. The mission was not to destroy the enemy, but instead to secure and win over the Sunni population. The primary mission of Casey's subsequent strategy has been to train and advise the Iraqi security forces that will hold the Sunni cities and challenge the Shiite militias. This would require about 15,000–20,000 U.S. advisers, 20,000 more in support, and 30,000 in combat units, remaining in Iraq for years.

This last, though, reflects Casey's "old" strategy. What is the new strategy? The president is leaving that largely to the new commander, Lt. Gen. David Petraeus. American troops are to surge into Baghdad, but what are they to do there? There are two choices: defense or offense. Defense means our soldiers will patrol the streets with Iraqi soldiers, search houses, hand out money to clean away the trash, and gradually turn control over to the Iraqis (again).

The Sunni extremists responsible for the mass car bombings will persist, albeit with fewer terrorist successes. A crackdown on al-Qaeda in Iraq will require clearing thousands of square kilometers of isolated farms northeast and especially southwest of Baghdad. That will take years.

The Shiite death squads, moreover, cause more than half the deaths in Baghdad, and they are not foolhardy. They will leave Baghdad or stay in their lairs in Shiite areas, especially Sadr City. As events in early 2005 showed, a live-and-let-live de facto understanding between American forces and the Mahdi Army is indeed possible. By late summer of 2007, or earlier, Baghdad will experience less violence if American and Iraqi soldiers increase their presence. This defensive strategy has a very high chance of succeeding for at least six months after the American troops leave.

The obvious risk is that the killers will return in 2008. Our military strategy, therefore, cannot assume that the Sunni insurgents or Shiite militias will decide to stop killing. The alternative, then, is to adopt an offensive strategy—one that seeks to kill or capture the enemy.

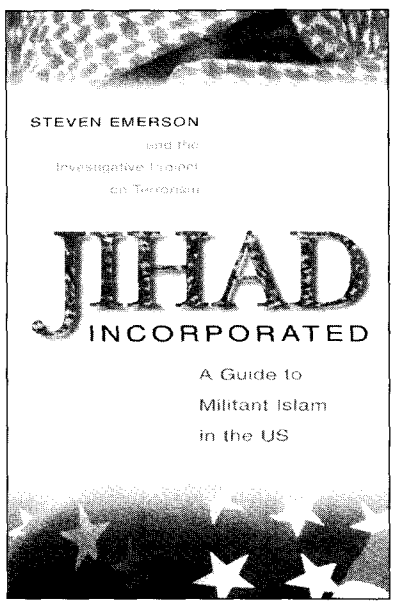
The Viet Cong in South Vietnam sustained huge losses because they chose to stand and fight the American units, a decision that reached its nadir in the tactically disastrous Tet offensive of 1968. In contrast, the Sunni insurgents have learned not to engage American units. Consequently, the insurgents are taking only light casualties.

A few months ago, I accompanied Marine squads on patrols in the violent Fallujah-Ramadi area. Forty grunts on their second tour estimated that they had shot a grand total of about seven insurgents. These experienced riflemen described the insurgents as "ghosts" who emplaced roadside bombs or fired a few shots and fled. American firepower was not diminishing the ranks of the Sunni insurgents, because the insurgents chose not to engage. Nor were American units engaging the Shiite militias. Put simply, we were not killing the enemy.

SUPPORT YOUR LOCAL POLICE

Military force *can* be used to identify and imprison the insurgents. But in Iraq, we aren't doing this. In Chicago and elsewhere, police carry palmtop devices that take fingerprints and send them to HQ—and in two minutes the patrolmen have a reply. If the suspect is not in the database, he is automatically entered. Our border police routinely use this system. But for some reason we have not provided such a simple system for Iraq. An insurgency cannot be quelled if the insurgents hiding among the civilians cannot be identified. The lack of an identification system, of the kind many American police forces use, is the greatest technical failure of the war.

The problem is also one of numbers. U.S. and Iraqi battalions arrest at a rate about one-eighth that of U.S. law-enforcement agencies; Iraqi police make even fewer arrests. If Iraqi police had the same arrest and imprisonment rate for violent crime as the U.S.,



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there would be 85,000 inmates in Iraqi jails, instead of 14,000. The Iraqi court system in Baghdad imprisons 10 to 24 criminals and insurgents each week—one-twentieth the number in New York City. It is unlikely that a resident of Baghdad believes his neighbors are 20 times more law-abiding than those in New York.

In Iraq, the "rule of law" is another factor aiding the insurgency. An enemy soldier in uniform is imprisoned for the duration of the hostilities—but an insurgent in civilian clothes can kill an American soldier and, unless the evidence is airtight, walk free in a few days to kill again. Iraqi and American forces have been in the same locations for four years. They know the usual suspects. But to make more arrests, we would have to stop releasing so many detainees.

This last will be hard for the U.S. to do. Currently, the U.S. military processes every detainee through four layers of review and releases eight out of every ten. Everyone knows why this "catch and release program" persists: It's driven by an overreaction to the abuses at Abu Ghraib in 2003. But the Iraqi security forces cannot win if the insurgents cannot be identified, arrested, and imprisoned for the long haul. If current arrest and imprisonment rates persist under the "new" strategy, the American effort in Iraq is in deep peril.

THE SOLDIERS' STORY

It's also essential that we use our troops more wisely. American troops in American battalions are less vital than American troops in Iraqi battalions. We have now about 4,000 advisers in the Iraqi forces; a better number is closer to 20,000. They do not have to be of the caliber of our Army Special Forces. The Marines in Vietnam successfully inserted rifle squads into villages to form Combined Action Platoons with local forces. Many more advisers are needed to go out on patrol with the Iraqis, and to extract resources for the Iraqi troops from the sclerotic ministries in Baghdad.

In return for our assistance, we must demand joint U.S.-Iraqi boards that appoint Iraqis to key police and military positions and remove officers for malfeasance. Maliki is pushing for full control over the Iraqi army by the summer. To grant him that would be a huge mistake: He hasn't earned it. The ministries in Baghdad have been unable to support their own forces. If a Shiite government could do what it pleased with the Iraqi army, we would lose all leverage. For sectarian interests to pack the top ranks with loyalists would destroy morale.

The insurgents, death squads, and common thugs now have the initiative; they choose when to attack. Iraqi soldiers and police dare not wear a uniform when they visit their own homes. That tells you who is in charge.

Clear benchmarks for performance under the new strategy can be easily instituted. It is not sufficient to report only incidents of violence. In the early '90s, New York City substantially increased its police force and instituted tough standards. The same can be done in Baghdad. Arrest and incarceration rates can be tracked. So can the location and criminal affiliation—Sunni insurgent or Shiite death squad—of the culprits.

We face two different military challenges. The first is curbing the Sunni bombers and Shiite death squads in Baghdad: The goal is to destroy the Sunni insurgents and to stop the Shiite militias who are murdering and driving out the non-insurgent Sunnis. The U.S. military has the information and the operational skills to break the death squads. This must include moving into Sadr City. The Shiite militias are frightened by what might be coming; that fear should be backed by action. If Moqtada al-Sadr responds by urging a third rebellion by the Mahdi Army, he must be seized, imprisoned, and not released. There is no way of avoiding the risk of citywide chaos for a few days. But things will settle down.

The second challenge is destroying the Sunni insurgents in Anbar province. Anbar, the size of North Carolina, is the lair of the Islamic extremists. These murderers are an especially tough problem, because a few car bombs wreak so much carnage, provoking Shiite rage and revenge. Al-Qaeda in Iraq must be destroyed in Anbar, if we want to keep the bombings in Baghdad from resuming after American forces pull out. The key in Anbar is allying tough local cops or Iraqi battalion commanders with the local tribes, providing a robust adviser corps, and situating American battalions in bases for quick strikes and on-call reinforcement.

A short-sighted consensus is forming to play defense and to concentrate on neighborhoods where the Shiite militias are not strong. Maliki has argued that this would give the death squads a chance to redeem themselves: If they don't disband, we will supposedly move against them in the summer. But they are killers, not patriots, and murderers persist in their trade. Sadr and his followers have to be hit—and hit hard. They have consistently folded under attack in the past, and they are scared now: Sadr has begun betraying his own. If we are serious as New York City was in the '90s, the arrest and long-term incarceration rate in Baghdad will exceed 2,500 per month, of whom 50 percent or more will be members of Shiite death squads. The only institution, finally, that can bring stability to Iraq is not the under-performing office of the prime minister or the fractious national assembly. It is the Iraqi Army. Casey knew what he was doing; that's why Sadr feared him.

In sum, we need a coherent, aggressive military strategy on the local level as well as a top-down political strategy. If we are serious about a military strategy, we will take the following actions immediately:

- Deploy hand-held identification devices to fingerprint all military-age males and deprive the insurgents of the ability to move about and blend in with the population.
- Shift platoons from our battalions to Iraqi army and police units.
- Train our units and advisers in tough police techniques.
- Give cash to our battalions and advisers to buy the loyalty of tribes and reward Iraqi battlefield performance.
- Take the offense in Baghdad, with no area off-limits.
- Imprison insurgents and militia leaders for the duration of hostilities—period.
- Insist on joint U.S.-Iraqi boards for key appointments and removal for malfeasance.

The Iraqi army is the least sectarian organization in Iraq. President Bush should keep open the possibility that the army will control Iraq, as the military did in South Korea and in Turkey in decades past. A stable Iraq under military rule—overt or behind-the-scenes—is preferable to a failed state. **NR**

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■ PUBLIC POLICY II

Be Like Jeb!

A suburban agenda for Republicans, with models to emulate

JOHN HOOD

THE stories of Tim Pawlenty and Mark Green are, up to a point, similar. Both are Midwestern Republican ex-legislators, and both ran for governor. But Pawlenty succeeded—first in a hard-fought three-way contest for governor of Minnesota in 2002, and again in a narrow three-way contest in 2006—while Green fell short in his 2006 bid to unseat Democratic governor Jim Doyle in Wisconsin. A respectable case can be made that suburban voters accounted for the difference between their fates. Pawlenty won suburban majorities in both of his gubernatorial runs, with particularly large margins in the Minneapolis–St. Paul area. Green, a four-term congressman, managed no better than a tie with Doyle in the overall Wisconsin suburban vote, and flat-out lost most of the suburban neighborhoods except those around Milwaukee. If Pawlenty had only matched Green's statewide performance in the suburbs, he would have been a gubernatorial also-ran, rather than a two-term governor on John McCain's shortlist for VP.

The notion that the Republican ascendancy of the 1990s was propelled by a growing and favorable suburban electorate is commonplace and oversimplified. But it's also true. While in a few southern and western states GOP candidates were able to win primarily by racking up huge majorities in rural areas and small towns to offset huge deficits in urban votes, the electoral math worked differently in most competitive states. Republican-leaning independents in burgeoning suburban and exurban communities were a pivotal element of winning coalitions in states from Washington to Florida. The suburbs contained large numbers of the kinds of voters who had been gravitating to the GOP during the past two decades, such as entrepreneurs and married couples with children. High rates of homeownership made suburban voters especially allergic to tax increases, a core Republican issue.

Not surprisingly, then, Republicans have repeatedly outpolled Democrats in suburban precincts, although not always by much. According to the 2004 exit polls, Republican candidates for U.S. House won 51 percent of the suburban vote, while the two parties each won handily in their respective geographical bases—Democrats by 55–43 in urban precincts and Republicans by 54–44 in rural ones. But in 2006, Democrats managed a slight edge (50–48) in the suburbs, which made up nearly half the electorate that year. The significance of suburban voters to winning GOP coalitions is even more pronounced when you look at state races. In 1994, 1998, and 2002, Republican candidates for governor in New York, Ohio, Massachusetts, and other non-southern states typically won their victories by strong showings in the suburbs. In states that went for the Democrats in 2002, such as Pennsylvania and Michigan, the successful Democratic candidates had erased or reversed the suburban-vote margins. And by 2006, Democratic candidates for governor were able to crush Republicans in the suburbs of many of these states—by 57–40 in Ohio, 59–41 in Pennsylvania, and an astounding 61–34 in Arizona. It is no exaggeration to say that the GOP is simply dead in the water in such places unless it regains its ability to attract suburban voters.

In fashioning a national strategy to accomplish this, it makes sense for Republicans to begin with a closer analysis of their (few) 2006 victories in competitive states. For example, what did Pawlenty in Minnesota and Charlie Crist in Florida do to retain the allegiance of suburban voters in an otherwise challenging year for their party? The short answer is that they retained the traditional GOP advantage on tax and fiscal policy (albeit somewhat clumsily in Pawlenty's case) while communicating effectively and credibly in the suburbs on close-to-home issues that swing voters there care deeply about, such as education and health care. Novel? Hardly. But essential.

A SHIFTING MIX OF ISSUES

To some extent, Republican politicians and the post-1980 GOP coalition have lately been victims of their own policy successes. Victories over rampant inflation, economic sclerosis, and the Soviet empire during the 1980s resulted in a general changing of the political subject. Similarly, during the 1990s, growing Republican strength in Congress and state and local governments led to the implementation of tough conservative policies on crime and welfare. From their peaks in 1992, rates of violent and property crime in the U.S. had fallen by 38 percent and 33 percent, respectively, by 2006. Regarding the need to reform cash welfare programs, GOP governors such as Wisconsin's Tommy Thompson led the way during the early 1990s, setting the stage for historic federal legislation in 1996. Welfare caseloads plummeted, as did the poverty rate (the latter did post an uptick during the recent recession, but the long-term trend remains downward).

These issues had captured public attention and propelled Republican electoral gains for decades. Crime and welfare dependency had both soared during most of the 1960s, 1970s, and early 1980s. These trends worried otherwise-centrist swing voters, for good reason. In 1964, as President Lyndon Johnson began articulating his plans for the Great Society, about 2.1 percent of Americans were receiving cash welfare assistance. The rate rose to 5.2 percent by 1972 and averaged around 5 percent for the next quarter century; in 1996, it was 4.8 percent. But by 2000, it had fallen back to the pre–Great Society rate of 2.1. This was a breathtaking achievement. It also had the effect of moving an issue with a traditionally Republican edge off the public agenda.

By the beginning of this decade, then, the Reagan-era Republican coalition had begun to lose some of its issue edge. Foreign policy seemed less salient. Crime rates, welfare rolls, and even social indicators such as teen pregnancy and abortion rates were down. Taxes remained a core issue for GOP campaigns, but as many families saw prices rise dramatically for services such as college education and health care, some became at least willing to listen to the Democratic argument that smaller government wouldn't necessarily save them enough money in taxes to offset the

Mr. Hood is a syndicated columnist and president of the John Locke Foundation, a public-policy think tank in Raleigh, N.C.

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benefits of existing or potential government spending programs. More generally, says Democratic campaign consultant Brad Crone, Republicans stopped being the party of new ideas, at least in the minds of independent voters. "They had been disenchanted with the status quo in the 1990s, and that gave Republican candidates an opening to communicate something new," says Crone—but by the end of the decade, the GOP began to look as if it were more interested in "protecting incumbents" than in "selling new ideas." The underwhelming performance of George W. Bush and many Republican Senate and gubernatorial candidates in 2000 was a clear sign that the GOP coalition had electoral problems. Its leaders weren't prepared to present independents or even some marginally Republican voters a credible set of solutions on emerging suburban issues such as education, health care, and transportation. (Remember when presidential candidate Al Gore talked about traffic congestion? Conservatives laughed. Swing voters didn't.)

But only a few months into the precariously established Bush administration came September 11. Suddenly, foreign and defense issues were again of paramount political importance, and again Democrats proved to be ham-handed and untrustworthy on foreign affairs. Ensuing Republican victories in 2002 and 2004 were the result primarily of wartime politics plus superior campaign logistics. Even as they won federal races on foreign policy, however, Republicans tellingly began to lose key state and local races. While 2002 was a good year for Republican legislative candidates, Democrats picked up governorships in big states such as Pennsylvania, Michigan, and Illinois. In 2004, Republicans posted significant losses in state legislatures even as President Bush was reelected.

Gov. Tim Pawlenty (R., Minn.)

In November 2006, the hollowness of the down-ballot Republican party finally resulted in a cave-in, with Democrats picking up six governorships, more than 320 legislative seats, and hundreds of city and county offices across the country. Much that the GOP had gained over the previous twelve years was erased, with Democratic governors in power in 28 states and Democratic legislatures in 23 (compared with 22 Republican governors and only 15 GOP legislatures). While many congressional losses could be chalked up to personal scandals and disaffection with the Iraq War, the state and local losses point to a weakened Republican party with major challenges in message and relevance, and with particularly bleak prospects outside the South.

THE MINNESOTA PATH

A notable, if complicated, exception could be found in the blue state of Minnesota. The state house flipped from Republican to DFL (Democratic-Farmer-Labor, the Democratic ticket in the state); the DFL majority in the state senate grew far stronger; Republicans lost ground in the congressional delegation; DFL nominee Amy Klobuchar easily won her race for U.S. Senate—but at the same time, Governor Pawlenty was able to eke out a 47–46–6 plurality win over DFL attorney general Mike Hatch and Peter Hutchinson, the nominee of the Independence party of former governor Jesse Ventura. This was actually an increase in Pawlenty's vote from 2002, when he won 44 percent against the DFL's Roger Moe (37 percent) and Tim Penny (16 percent), the Independence nominee that year.

Pawlenty demonstrated in his 2002 election an ability to mix traditional GOP messages on taxes with appeals to suburban voters on other issues. His no-new-taxes pledge was essential to securing the Republican nomination and mobilizing conservative voters for the general election that year, but Pawlenty also called for higher academic standards in the public schools, merit pay for teachers, and billions of dollars in new bond funding for highways to alleviate congestion in the Minneapolis–St. Paul region, one of the ten most-congested metro areas in the country. "Pawlenty is a conservative but he is also very much a pragmatist," says Mitch Pearlstein, president of the Center of the American Experiment in Minneapolis. As majority leader in the GOP-controlled state house during the Ventura years, Pawlenty had worked effectively with an independent governor and Democratic senate to enact tri-partisan legislation, including tax cuts, so it wasn't much of a stretch to present himself to unaffiliated voters as a problem-solver. He is also a likable politician with a regular-guy image: During the campaign, Pawlenty said that Republicans should be "the party of Sam's Club, not just the country club." Independents in the suburbs broke his way in 2002. (The third-party bid by Penny, formerly a DFL congressman, also played a role in Pawlenty's victory, by pulling votes disproportionately from the DFL column.)

Upon becoming governor, Pawlenty received an unpleasant surprise. He had promised on the campaign trail to balance a state budget more than $1 billion in the red without raising taxes, only to discover after the election that the budget hole was really closer to $4.5 billion. To his credit, Pawlenty followed through on spending restraint and resisted calls for tax hikes. To his discredit, though, he eventually resorted to the gimmick of endorsing a 75-cent-per-pack increase in tobacco taxes that he called a "health-impact fee." It passed. Fortunately, the terminological trick proved to be too cute: The national tobacco settlement with state governments in the 1990s had allowed the states to raise taxes, but not fees; a court struck down the "fee" hike at the end of 2005, just as new revenue numbers were revealing a welcome budget surplus. In general, though, Pawlenty stayed to the right on budget matters, and in the 2006 vote he ended up winning a solid 92 percent of Republicans and 87 percent of self-identified conservatives.

That GOP support certainly helped. But his reelection bid was also greatly strengthened by his ability to address the everyday concerns of suburban parents—and independents. Savaged by political and media critics for education "cuts," for example, Pawlenty was able to focus public attention on his success in instituting higher academic standards and graduation requirements. (Minnesota's

ROMAN GENN

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reading and math scores on national tests were in fact slightly higher in 2005 than they had been before his election.) This is not to suggest that Pawlenty was able to wrest the education issue away from the DFL nominee, Hatch; according to surveys by the University of Minnesota's Hubert H. Humphrey Institute, Hatch still retained a sizable edge on education. But the margin was narrowed. "The difference was not big enough to propel Mike Hatch to victory," says Eric Ostermeier, a political scientist at the institute and author of its Smart Politics blog.

On transportation, the Pawlenty administration delivered major road-construction projects ahead of schedule by using an innovative contracting model, and also converted the car-pool lanes of a major Minneapolis artery into high-occupancy toll (HOT) lanes—a promising strategy both for managing congestion and for raising needed highway revenues from specific users rather than general taxpayers.

As for health care, Pawlenty was able to avoid the familiar trap of GOP defensiveness. He went on the attack with a TV spot warning that a Mike Hatch proposal would increase the cost of health plans by encouraging lawsuits against insurers for punitive damages. In public appearances, Pawlenty talked enthusiastically about health savings accounts and the broader industry movement toward consumer-driven health care, based on price transparency and patient incentives. (While he has also talked about "universal coverage" for all Minnesota children, and after the election promised to promote policies to accomplish that goal in alliance with the now-Democratic legislature, it would be a mistake to assume that Pawlenty favors simply expanding current government-insurance programs.) Hatch still outpolled Pawlenty on the issue of health care, and it was likely less important to swing voters than were taxes and education; but the governor made it impossible for Democrats to label him callous or inattentive. "Republicans allow themselves to be put in a box of defending the status quo and looking tentative about reform," says Greg Scandlen, a former insurance-industry analyst who now heads the Maryland-based group Consumers for Health Care Choices. On this, as on other suburban issues, Pawlenty stayed out of the box—and now has a second term.

SUNSHINE SUPERMAN

If Tim Pawlenty can be described as a maverick politician marrying conservatism and populism in a blue state, the best description of outgoing Florida governor Jeb Bush would be a transformational politician marrying conservatism and innovation in a red state. Actually, while Florida did reelect a solidly Republican state legislature and essentially gave Bush a third term with the election of Gov. Charlie Crist in 2006, it's important to remember that the state is highly competitive—and not just, famously, in recent presidential races. Crist won by more than 300,000 votes in a state where Democrats still outnumber Republicans by more than 300,000 votes. The GOP has done well in Florida state politics because it has been successful in both its campaign mechanics and its administration of state government. The outgoing governor deserves, and widely receives, credit for these accomplishments.

Jeb Bush was one of the few talented, well-funded Republican candidates who lost in 1994 (even as his less-wonkish brother became governor of Texas). Immediately setting his sights on another gubernatorial run four years later, Bush created a public-policy foundation and convened political and policy experts to map out a plan not just for attaining power in Tallahassee but for what to do with it. After the 1998 election, Bush was ready with a broad and aggressive agenda—on fiscal restraint, tax cuts, and social issues, to be sure, but also on education, health care, transportation, and conservation. For just about every free-market idea articulated by think tankers and policy veterans over the past two decades, you can find a corresponding policy that the Jeb Bush administration sought to implement, often effectively. For example:

Education. Bush promoted higher academic standards, merit pay, regular testing, and consequences for failure (including public and private school choice). His main voucher program has been challenged in court—but at least Bush, unlike some of his fellow Republican governors, had enacted a voucher program to be challenged. Reading and math scores rose markedly during the Bush years.

Fiscal discipline. Bush signed into law nearly $20 billion in tax cuts during his tenure, using his line-item veto, reductions in the state workforce, and privatization to spend state

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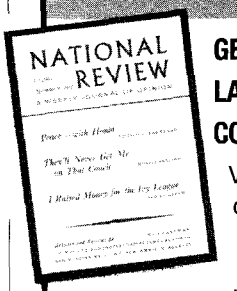

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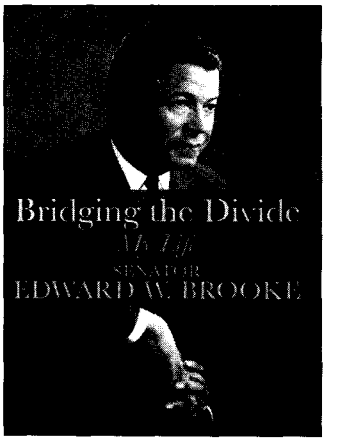

Edward W. Brooke's compelling autobiography tells of his meteoric rise from Boston lawyer to Massachusetts' attorney general to the first popularly elected African American U.S. Senator—and recipient of the Presidential Medal of Freedom.

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dollars more efficiently. Although some private contracts have proven problematic, a risk that can be mitigated but not eliminated through careful program design and administration, most of Bush's more than 100 privatization initiatives have succeeded, freeing up more than $2 billion to return to Florida taxpayers and spend on high-priority public services.

Health care. Florida's promising pilot program for reforming Medicaid through the use of consumer choice and market mechanisms has already been making national waves. More generally, Bush blocked costly regulations on health plans and held Medicaid spending relatively low—impressive, given the state's growing geriatric population.

Transportation. Bush resisted calls for expensive high-speed trains, arguing that they would consume scarce dollars needed to expand capacity to alleviate congestion on Florida's major highways. The administration contracted out the collection of tolls to private firms and pushed through legislation to build more toll lanes.

reform, and consumer-driven plans are starting to gain significant market share among employer groups of all sizes, Republicans should resist the temptation to over-promise. To some extent, the rising price of health-care services is not only inevitable but is actually good news—it signifies that medical services are increasingly valued by consumers, because technology has boosted their efficacy and because people are living longer. Greg Scandlen of Consumers for Health Care Choices warns that too many opponents of government intrusion into health-care policies and decisions appear to be siding with private insurance bureaucracies that are at least as unpopular. "If the choice you put before people is between a private third-party payer and the government, a lot would choose the government," he says. The real choice is between consumer control and control by bureaucracy, public or private. Some suburban voters desire that personal control. Realistically, though, others will be nervous about it. Politicians sell the notion that government can deliver something for nothing because there is a market for that product.

Candidates who talk about challenging issues and propose new ideas, but do so with a smile, exude a comforting confidence.

The new governor, Crist, differs from Bush on some matters of style and substance, but for the most part he asked voters to continue the Bush approach to governance. As a former Jeb Bush administration official, and the elected education commissioner when Bush pushed through his school-reform plan, Crist could correctly say that he had already had a hand in the governor's successful reform initiatives. His Democratic opponent, Congressman Jim Davis, said the Bush approach had been disastrous and it was time for a change. The voters—including solid majorities of suburban voters in southwestern, central, and northern Florida—agreed with Crist. Nearly 70 percent of voters in exit polls approved of Bush's job performance.

In Florida as in Minnesota, Republican reformers didn't try to sell their agenda merely with ideological slogans. Nor did they embrace only the most pristinely free-market ideas. For example, while Bush did promote parental choice in education, he spent more time and political capital on the issue of standards and testing. Because most suburban parents use public schools and don't feel trapped within them, having often chosen their neighborhood with the attendance zone in mind, choice alone is an insufficient education message for them (though I would argue that, for both political and policy reasons, it is a necessary component of a successful GOP message). Michael Petrilli, a former Education Department official now working at the Thomas B. Fordham Foundation, an education think tank in Washington, D.C., says that Republicans should avoid falling into the trap of advocating choice for its own sake; they should articulate instead the educational benefits—stronger discipline, higher standards, better teaching—their reforms seek to extend to families. Petrilli calls it the "Clinton approach": showing that you share the voters' concerns and aspirations before proposing a specific policy to address them.

Similarly, while health savings accounts are a promising

While Pawlenty and Crist brought unique views and strengths to clearly distinguishable races, the political pros I've talked to consistently speak of a common characteristic: a likable, optimistic personality. Crist "was selling a message of hope and accessibility against a Democratic message of doom and gloom," says Rich Heffley, a Republican consultant who worked on the Crist campaign. In the Minnesota race, Hatch lost his temper in a media flap about an embarrassing comment by his running mate. "You may have heard of the expression 'Minnesota nice,'" says Ostermeier, the political scientist. "Hatch's conduct was not Minnesota nice."

In most of the country, in fact, independents and suburban swing voters may be worried about pocketbook and quality-of-life issues or dissatisfied with the political establishment, says Democratic consultant Crone, but they "like to see positives and solutions. Americans are basically an optimistic people." One might say that attracting these voters isn't about ideology, it's about confidence. Candidates who talk about challenging issues and propose new ideas (sometimes even risky ones), but do so with a smile, exude a comforting confidence. They obviously believe their solutions will work. Think Jeb Bush, think Ronald Reagan. Suburbanites busy with their own careers, families, and communities don't spend a lot of time pondering political questions. They are looking for someone to offer them credible, constructive answers. If Republican politicians believe that academic rigor and parental choice will improve schools, that consumer-driven health care is the right direction, and that markets and automobility are a better solution to transportation snarls than central planning and commuter rail, they shouldn't shy away from saying so, as long as they do it with a smile.

Come to think of it, if they don't believe these things, a suburban strategy for the GOP isn't worth having, anyway. **NR**

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the bent pin

FLORENCE KING

Grosser and Grosser

THE catalogue of suggested Christmas gifts I got last month was not from an Elvis-on-velvet outlet. The section of gifts for adults offered quality cameras and binoculars, and enough travel accoutrements and aquarium fixtures to place their targeted customers in the disposable-income/desirable-suburb class. And, to judge by the reading lamps, they are also what America boldly calls "the highly educated."

In other words, "nice" people. Or so I thought until I came to the section of gifts for children.

It starts out okay. There's a little weaving loom, a little pottery wheel, a little chemistry lab, even a little digital steering wheel with turn signals and gear box marked "12 months +" so suburban babies can get a head start on their licenses. There's still a doctor's kit, just as in my day, though the new one has a stethoscope with heartbeat and breathing sounds and "a pager that alerts you to emergencies." There's still an electric train, though it has lots more gizmos and sound effects, including "crew dialogue." But the newest item is the little ATM machine that does everything the real ones do and even has a security camera.

Practical, I thought approvingly. I was approaching that rare state known as a good mood when I turned the page.

"NEW! GROSS MAGIC! Magic isn't a pleasant parlor game anymore! Gross out your friends and family with twenty gross card tricks and more than forty revolting routines that use snot, slime, boogers, veins, cockroaches, squashed eyeballs, and even a toilet full of poo. They're all nauseatingly cool! Ages 8+."

"NEW! GROSSMASTER JOKE MACHINE! What's the difference between broccoli and a booger? Kids don't eat broccoli! This joke—and dozens more—will amuse and disgust your friends. Requires three AAA batteries (included). Ages 10+."

"NEW! YUCK SPECIMEN JAR! Get gross! Get disgusting! It's scientific! You can create slimy snot and slippery worms—or grow a gelatinous hand, brain, or ear inside the jar. And if you really want to get disgusting, grow your own bacteria. Gross, funny, and educational at the same time! Ages 8+."

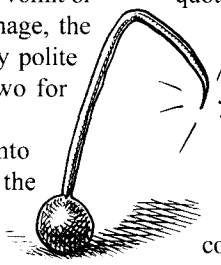
There were more, including a selection of "Horror Balls" that, when squeezed, squirt out various bodily fluids. For little ones who can't decide between vomit or diarrhea and urine or hemorrhage, the pitch concludes with the eerily polite suggestion, "Let us choose two for you."

Why this sudden plunge into stomach-turning vulgarity in the children's section? Don't the highly educated, desirably suburbanized parents of the little shoppers object to spending their disposable incomes on toys advertised with words like snot, boogers, and poo?

Probably not. Times have changed since Walt Disney eliminated "Burpy" as a name for one of Snow White's dwarfs. Today's definition of offensive speech is based solely on political correctness and in this the catalogue is unsurpassed. Once there were doctor's kits with a boy's picture on the box and nurse's kits with a girl's picture on the box. Now there is no nurse's kit; the entire gross-out line of toys is genderless. Furthermore, the ingredients used in them "will not harm the environment."

The gross-out vocabulary, infantile by definition, was bound to find favor with Americans. "Poo" is turning up more and more on television, possibly because there are so many News You Can Use segments about how to walk your dog. I wouldn't be surprised if they keep reverting to this topic just for the naughty pleasure they get from saying "pooper-scooper" over and over. Check out the mischievous little smirks, particularly on the svelte, sophisticated anchorettes, and you will see arrested development in all its puerile glory. Strip off the feminist veneer and you have the woman who used to simper, "I don't mind dirty jokes as long as they're *cute*." The same woman who would call a passionate bite, in the unlikely event that she ever got one, a "boo-boo."

"Snotty" invariably wins out over "snide." They mean the same thing but "snide" is an unusually adult word, evoking threatening images of Noel Coward, Clifton Webb, and George Sanders. Chances of anyone bothering to edit "snotty" are remote now that the root word has emerged from the lips of Barack Obama. In a meeting with the *Chicago Tribune* he called himself a "snot-nosed rookie." It was quoted in the paper by Rick Pearson, and then quoted on *Hardball* by Jim Warren, and repeated moments later on the same show by Tony Blankley. A male version of the mischievous little smirk flashed across both their faces, and no doubt across Obama's, but all of them can be counted on to turn deadly serious about what else emerges from Obama's lips: cigarette smoke. His language is clean, you see, but his habit, which he calls his "obvious detriment," is dirty. But bad as it is for the air, it's much worse for the airwaves, being the obvious subconscious source of the overworked metaphor about his mere presence being enough to "suck the oxygen out of the room."



Good honest profanity has a prideful thrust that our current snickerfest lacks. We speak of the "coarsening" of the culture, but Patton was coarse, longshoremen are coarse, and so, too, is all righteous wrath. We ought to speak of the splattering of the culture because we are fixated on things that need to be wiped up. They are things that are properly ignored, but we make them the centerpiece of the event, as with George H. W. Bush's contretemps in Japan, when we gleefully substituted "throw up," "barf," and "heave" for vomit and mentioned it again and again.

We could do with a few euphemisms. It is not too Victorian to point out that "horses sweat, gentlemen perspire, and ladies glow"—and presidents are taken ill. **NR**

Florence King can be reached at P.O. Box 7113, Fredericksburg, VA 22404.

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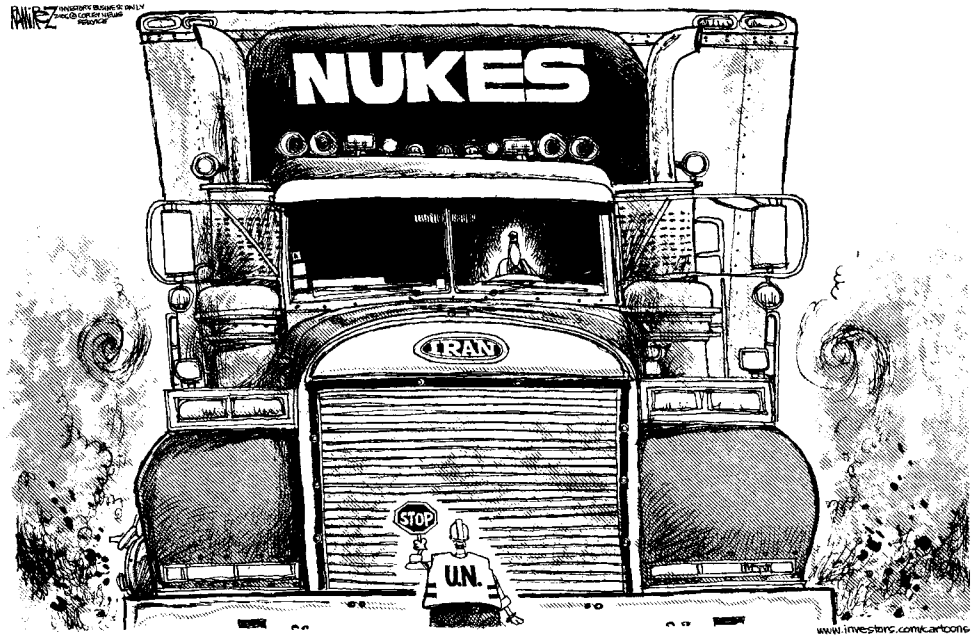
HELP!!!!

DAMN!

Payrolls are buoyant; wages, too.
A surly Barney Frank
Checked unemployment (four point five),
Muttering something rank.
Jobs grew so fast, Pelosi's eyes
Bugged like a boa's when
Denied a gulp, while Harry Reid
Refreshed his poisoned pen.

—W. H. VON DREELE

"Gays can threaten my *marriage all they like."*



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the long view

ROB LONG

The Candidates' Diaries

Special Dark-Horse Edition™

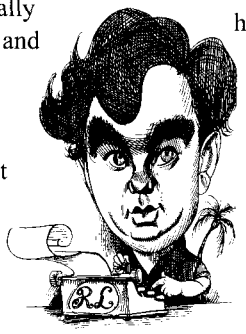
From the e-mail inbox of Ambassador Alan Keyes:

FROM: Travelocity Travel Team
RE: Manchester, New Hampshire, Marriott

You are booked in a non-smoking single room. Checking in March 12th, 2007. Checking out January 22nd, 2008.

From the diary of Lou Dobbs:

. . . nice-looking lapels, really sharp, almost military style, and a more severe cut, which is what I asked for months ago and which they finally got right. I'm usually against sending any job overseas, but let me tell you: getting a simple quasi-military uniform for me to wear on the show, and for some of my devoted followers to wear as well, has been a royal pain in the you-know-what. I should have just sent my drawings to China and been done with it. "Look," I said, "I need this uniform for the great people of this country who are getting the shaft from the corporations and the elites and who need a regular, all-American stand-up guy in their corner to serve as President and, you know, maybe more." The tailors just sort of looked at me. Idiots! We might have to nationalize that whole industry at some point. Still, when I tried it on I have to say I was pleased with the results. It's going to look great in the studio, marching along with my followers, speaking from balconies, etc. What they're working on now is a kind of peaked cap with a "Lou Dobbs" insignia, which I know they'll try to keep me from wearing on the air—executives! To hell with all of them!—but which I think will look great on Dobbs's Army, especially with the starburst lapel pins I'm designing . . .



From the dictated memoirs of Vice President Dick Cheney:

. . . systolic numbers not bad. Couple of glitches in terms of blockage and plaque build-up, still better than baseline numbers a few years ago. Could easily make the case to certain key journos that I'm in fact healthier now than when I first took office and have data from the treadmill stress-test to back that up considerably. Would have to begin soon on image and general persona repair, raising money not an issue re: Halliburton. Discuss with principals and complete decision process by early next month. Memo: cancel hunting plans . . .

From the private blog of Hon. Newt Gingrich:

. . . massive multi-user games? What could be more evocative, more exemplary of the American democratic experiment circa 2010 than Wizards of Warcraft? What if we could somehow link up the dedicated user base of a Second Life and the passionate advocacy of a DailyKos with YouTube and MySpace and create a multi-dimensional community of concerned citizens activating their choices in the web universe? Could this be a path to the presidency? Or, better for Gingrich, a virtual presidency? Is this a book idea? Or a column idea? Something to bring up on Hannity? Not Gingrich but Virtual Gingrich, Gingrich suspended in cyberspace, Gingrich in the mainframe, Gingrich appearing as an icon on the upper right of your screen at all times . . .

From the personal journal of Senator John Kerry:

. . . shhhhhhhh! Quiet now. Hush. They'll hear you, they will. They don't know us, do they, John? No, no. They think the voices are bad. Bad! But they're not! No! The voices tell me things—things to do, things to say. Sometimes the voices tell me to say things that no one understands. And then the voices make everybody mad. But they say good things. Good things. Wondrous things. The voices aren't bad! Don't say they're bad! DON'T SAY IT! DON'T DON'T DON'T!!!! Shhhhhhh. Hush, little prince. No one can hurt you. You've got the magic shine, you do. You've got the magic glow. Glow, my little king! Glow!

From http://blog.myspace.com/index.cfm/vicepresidentalgore

. . . thanx u guys!!!!! Luv ya lots!!!!! Happy New Year to my MySpace! Been thinking lots over the break about the whole planet and whatever and it's like what are we all going to do about it if anything, ug! :(so what I'm saying is that maybe if all of my myspacers really really really want me to, I may run for prez 1 mo' time, but only if there's, like, a buttload of peeps who are pushin it cuz it's hella work and hella spensive and you know what I'm sayin it's like, whoa, this is big stuff and I only doin it if there's some support out there know what I'm sayin? So hit me back and let me know and lets get this party started if we can cuz I'm hella stoked and hella lathered up for 08 if you dudes r 2 . . .

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Fantasy & Reality

Power, Faith, and Fantasy: America in the Middle East: 1776 to the Present, by Michael B. Oren (Norton, 778 pp., $35)

DAVID PRYCE-JONES

THE UNITED STATES and the world of Islam are separated by geographic distance, and even more by culture and religion. The present clash with Islamism might therefore seem beyond imagining, so wild and far-flung is it. Nonetheless, through the various crises in the Middle East, historic forces are at work to bring about this clash that can only be fateful, as Michael Oren elucidates. He is a scholar at a think tank in Jerusalem. Written with the narrative drive of a novel, his huge and thoughtful book is rich in past incident and anecdote that illuminate the present.

The establishment of the United States happened to coincide with a moment when the Muslim empires one and all were failing, and the leading European powers were about to obtain direct or indirect control over them. Introducing the concept of the nation-state, and the political arrangements that went with it, the Europeans sought to modernize the Middle East in their own image. Given time, West and East might have met on equal terms, but instead the world wars of the 20th century rapidly eroded the moral and political authority of the imperial European powers. Muslims have since had the opportunity to recover their long-lost supremacy, but neither nationalism imitated from Europe nor inherited religious faith has provided the means to that end, and they therefore continue to endure a society that fails to do them justice.

The success of its political and social model meanwhile places the United States in the position of dominance that the European powers once were in, landed with many of the same unresolved moral dilemmas and ensuing responsibilities. Current anti-Americanism grows from a rancorous sense that the U.S. is obliging Muslims and Europeans alike to review how and why they have come to be in such a mess.

The relationship of the U.S. to the Arab and Muslim worlds, Oren contends, is a permanent see-saw between American ideals and American interests that as a rule are abstractly defined and all too often prove incompatible. The U.S. began by expecting Arabs and Muslims to be nothing but trade partners, as peaceful as they themselves intended to be. Instead, corsairs from the Barbary States of the southern Mediterranean shore, nominally owing fealty to the Ottoman sultan, attacked trading vessels and sold American sailors in their hundreds into slavery. The U.S. response was to pay bribes for protection, and to redeem the slaves. One local ruler boasted, "You pay me tribute, by which you become my slaves"; another held that Americans were no different from Europeans and "will talk a great deal and do nothing, and at last come cap in hand and sue for peace upon my own terms."

Ship captains denounced these "mortifying degradations." William Eaton, U.S. consul in Tunis, was among those who concluded that in the Middle East power alone was respected, and that the U.S. had to wield it. Another consul, William Shaler, held that "Islamism . . . seems peculiarly adapted to the conceptions of barbarous people" and was amazed that so "worthless a power should have been so long permitted to vex the commercial world and extort ransom." Resorting to action at last, President Thomas Jefferson persuaded Congress to build a war fleet. Armed intervention then put an end to this piracy and slavery.

So constant is Arab and Muslim culture that current arguments about policy towards Iraq, Iran, or Syria are an almost exact repetition of those for or against that first American campaign in the Middle East. In the absence of Muslim reform, the choice before an American president still lies between some form of bribery or appeasement, and the deployment of power.

Michael Oren likes to press the point that relations with the Arab and Muslim world helped to develop the American national character. The suppression of slavery abroad was bound to influence attitudes in the Civil War. Collapsing cotton prices in Egypt were to play a part in that war. The Ottoman war against the Greeks, and subsequent large-scale Ottoman massacres of Bulgarians, Armenians, and others, impelled Americans to believe that Muslim rule was tyrannical in itself, and had the further explicit purpose of suppressing Christianity. American-style freedom and democracy came to be generally perceived as essential requisites for a stable Middle East. Such confident hope is now being tested, perhaps to destruction.

For the best part of his book, Oren tells stories of the travelers, adventurers, scholars, and assorted specialists for whom the Middle East was a chosen stamping ground. Driven by inner passions, these characters were original, sincere, brave, and often misguided. Cumulatively they established lasting stereotypes of the Middle East, or what Oren calls "a dreamlike chimerical aura" that might either sentimentalize reality or degrade it. For Mark Twain, for example, Arabs were "filthy, brutish, ignorant, unprogressive, superstitious people." A handful of Americans took service with either the Ottoman or the Egyptian army, and one or two of them converted to Islam. Gen. Charles Stone had fought for the Union side in the Civil War but was blamed for various

Mr. Pryce-Jones is an NR senior editor, and the author most recently of *Betrayal: France, the Arabs, and the Jews.*

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defeats, and disgraced. He then entered the service of the Egyptian khedive Ismail, took the side of Egyptian nationalists against the occupying British, and was finally involved in installing the Statue of Liberty. (Right up to the present, travel writing, the news media, and Hollywood habitually deal in similar contrary fantasies about heroes and villains in the Middle East.)

Few were more sincere or brave than Levi Parsons and Pliny Fisk, the first American missionaries in the Middle East. They and their families, and then their successors, often had to sacrifice their lives or their health for their beliefs. They made few converts to their brand of evangelical Protestantism, but nonetheless had a great impact on public opinion at home by highlighting American and Christian virtues against a backdrop of Muslim fatalism and cruelty. One of them, David Dorr, spoke for many when he described Muslims as bigots and "head-choppers of Christians." The educators, incorporating among others the well-known Bliss and Dodge families, founded institutions such as Robert College in Istanbul and the American Universities in Beirut and Cairo, which brought Western enlightenment to the region. The return of the Jews to Palestine was integral to the messianic worldview of evangelical churches. Representatives of various Christian sects were in effect proto-Zionists. The communities they set up in the Holy Land, however, usually came to a bad, and sometimes tragic, ending.

The spread of American influence and ideals through these various channels, as Oren charts, seemed in accord with the idea of Manifest Destiny. From a position of ever-increasing strength, presidents from Wilson to Eisenhower were able to push for the sort of world they wanted. A priority was to put a stop to European imperialism, and replace it with Arab nationalism. This, they supposed, would lead to independent and modern nation-states in the Middle East. Not merely reckless, this too was utter fantasy. Arab nationalism has only established ancient despotism in khaki uniforms, and better armed.

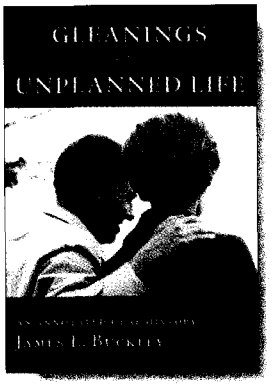
In 1945 a crunch occurred, when President Franklin Roosevelt committed the U.S. to an alliance with Saudi Arabia—which was more the estate of the ruling family than a country, and also a culture with which the U.S. could have nothing in common. The need for oil trumped idealism—and continues to do so. Another crunch followed shortly afterwards when the Jews in what had been British Palestine took their fate into their own hands, and declared the state of Israel. The foreign-policy elite in Washington argued that this development could only antagonize the Arabs and should therefore be opposed. President Truman struggled with his conscience and his emotions before deciding that in this case idealism trumped interests.

Far from reasserting independence and supremacy, the Arab and Muslim world is staggering from crisis to crisis.

Subsequent presidents have unanimously followed this moral lead—which of course still remains the basis of American support for Israel as well as an obstacle to relations with the Arab and Muslim world. During the Cold War, the U.S. supported other Arab or Muslim regimes that were undemocratic but anti-Communist. As President Nixon summarily defined the rivalry with the Soviet Union, "We want peace. They want the Middle East." Similarly Saddam Hussein was rescued from defeat in his war against Iran only to be overthrown when circumstances changed. Realism, now so fashionable, is an edifice built on double standards.

Possession and exercise of unprecedented power has drawn Washington inexorably into the political confusions and contradictions of the region. Far from reasserting independence and supremacy, the Arab and Muslim world is staggering from crisis to crisis. Like the old imperial powers it displaced, the U.S. has to balance the world as it is against the world as it would wish it to be; and in spite of its best efforts East and West continue to meet on unequal terms. This carefully researched book makes it clear that this is a predicament not likely to be resolved anytime soon. **NR**

Judge, Senator, American



Gleanings from an Unplanned Life: An Annotated Oral History, by James L. Buckley (ISI, 308 pp., $25)

JAIME SNEIDER

SENATOR/JUDGE/UNDERSECRETARY James L. Buckley discloses that he was born in an elevator. In this extraordinary book—done as a Question and Answer exploration for the Court of Appeals—Buckley is artfully questioned by a skilled lawyer, and we learn about much more than what he accomplished as a jurist on the formidable D.C. Circuit Court.

Before he got there, he had been elected senator from New York, served as an undersecretary of state, and headed Radio Free Europe; then, finally, came the court years. Judge Buckley is manifestly not a gabber, so it took the skills of the interrogator to draw out the full portrait of a remarkable man, whose inclinations were to immerse himself in nature (bird-watching continues to consume him), but who instead went to law school

Mr. Sneider formerly served as deputy associate director of the White House communications office. He is currently a second-year law student at Columbia University.

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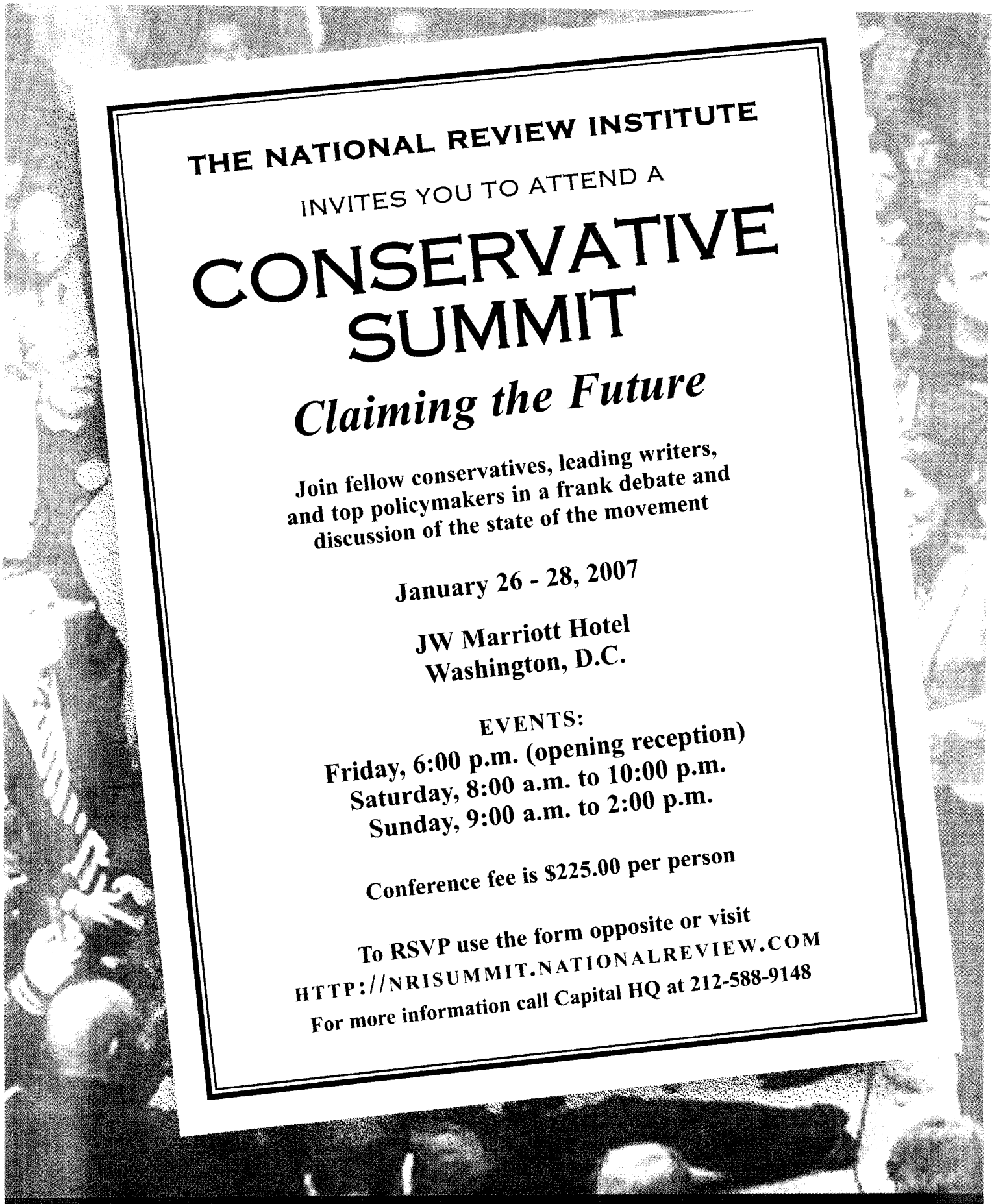

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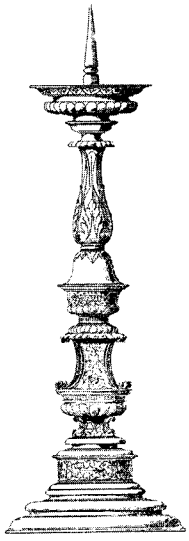
(Yale), engaged in business with his father (New York), and was lured to politics by Brother Bill (who induced him to act as political director of the famous race for mayor of New York). The public life attracted Jim, who soon was elected to the Senate on the Conservative-party line and stayed there until he was defeated by Daniel Patrick Moynihan.



We have here a self-described memoir of sorts, which he calls *Gleanings from an Unplanned Life*. The book is lively with newspaper clips, photographs, excerpts of one sort or another. But its backbone is the five interviews in which the energetic lady examiner gets from the diffident public servant a narrative text disclosing his views on public matters. Buckley, in a distinctive way, tells his story and keeps alive the family tradition of introducing wit in narrative, and of acknowledging, with extraordinary gentility, the views of others who come to different conclusions.

James Buckley's background was cosmopolitan; he spent some of his early years in Europe. "I hate to admit that I was not a typical, red-blooded American boy," though the reader is glad that he wasn't. Buckley preferred natural history and bird-watching to baseball. We learn that he owned as a child, or befriended as an adult, armadillos, hawks, flying squirrels, penguins, polar bears, boa constrictors, and walruses.

A wonderfully readable and informative part of the book recounts the author's service in the Navy during World War II. Buckley would never exaggerate to his benefit and tells us that he *heard* more gunfire in the Pacific than he ever saw, but he involves the reader directly. "We could hear the battleships' 16-inch shells rumbling overhead, sounding like muffled versions of New York City subway cars." During his two-year assignment at sea, Buckley spent only five nights off the ship. He describes running into former classmates at officers' clubs, fleeting personal engagement in the hectic war scene, yet all of this—social visits, improvised outings, wartime frolics—was done in the context of death and loneliness and common purpose. It becomes easier to understand the author's impatience with the lawlessness he witnessed in the Pacific during his brief layovers—it was so alarmingly frequent as to suggest the lawlessness of the campus radicals of the 1960s. Buckley acknowledges that the campus violence, the anti-war protests, the bombings, and the flag-burnings contributed to his unexpected decision to run for the Senate from New York a second time, after his defeat in the 1968 race.

At the outset of his successful 1970 Senate campaign, Buckley commissioned a revealing poll. The poll was not designed to instruct Buckley on which policies he should espouse when barnstorming the state. He was attempting to ascertain whether the uncompromising positions he already held could hope to resonate with voters. Though the poll results are not included in the book, Buckley's prospective campaign manager, F. Clifton White, opined that they told that victory would be possible in a three-way contest (which the race turned out to be), pitting liberal Democrats, liberal Republicans, and conservatives against one another.

If William F. Buckley Jr. is the public intellectual of the family, Jim is the political statesman. That his political views were diametrically opposed to those of the political establishment, both Democratic and GOP, explains what makes his memoir so riveting: He is the insider as outsider.

Buckley's account of his years in the Senate, where he served from 1971 to 1977, provides a firsthand look at contemporary conservatism in its awkward adolescence. Already more than the ideological movement of the 1960s, it was not yet the predominant political power it would become in the 1980s. As an improbable senator, Buckley took up a number of improbable causes, including what he describes as a Don Quixote–like assault on the venerable institution of pork-barrel politics. Some of these lost causes—indexation of the income tax, for example—later became law. And though Buckley acknowledged that the Human Life Amendment would never reach the floor, he introduced other legislation that required senators to take a position on unborn life. Congress actually enacted some of this legislation, including a law forbidding the execution of pregnant women. "Whether it has resulted in any statistical increase in death-row pregnancies, I can't say," Buckley quips.

Many of the public-policy proposals Buckley put forward had not been heard from any political legislator. Buckley's reflections on race and the environment are especially captivating. By introducing legislation to help blacks start their own businesses and own their own homes, Buckley offered an empowering alternative to the dependency-instilling Great Society welfare programs. Buckley also discusses employing staff members to assist his black constituents in navigating unfriendly government bureaucracies so as to obtain benefits already available but difficult to secure. "When I touched on this theme on the campaign trail, I heard boos from rednecks in the back of the hall, and (I regret to say) the Conservative party had its share of them."

Another area that interested Buckley—environmentalism—had not yet become a left-wing property. Long before former vice president Al Gore brought hysteria into the debate, Senator Buckley was injecting reason. He supported national regulation to protect the envi-

DATES

Dates come and go,
Slip the mind
And drip from stone.

They start as someone else's dates
But soon become our own.

Like coughs from rows of faces
Below the Philharmonic,
The dates record the traces
Of beings not Platonic.

Do writers and engravers
Use parentheses
To hush the sleepless fear of death
Or to give the dead some peace?

—LEE OSER

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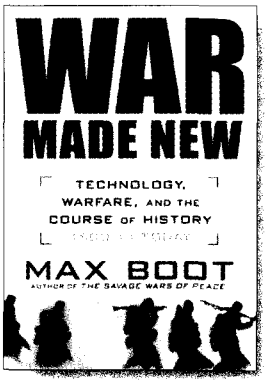
ronment. His program, however, had conservative bearings. It required, for example, that the government balance costs and benefits when formulating regulation. Buckley's analysis of public policy over and over reveals his conviction that conservatism was not just the repackaging of old ideas with rhetorical sleight-of-hand: The creation of blue-state conservatism entailed reinventing the Republican party with new analysis and new ideas.

Just as arresting as his account of his time in the Senate is his description of the decade he spent as a federal judge. Legal scholars consider the D.C. Circuit the most intellectual and prestigious of the appeals courts; four of the nine current Supreme Court justices previously sat on its bench, including Chief Justice Roberts, who succeeded to the seat vacated by Buckley when he retired. Buckley's most engaging thoughts about his time on the court illuminate how his experience in the government's other two branches shaped his philosophy as a judge.

In a word, Buckley is a textualist, and believes judges need mostly to look to the text of the statute (or Constitution) when interpreting the law. As a former senator, he was well equipped to understand the pitfalls of relying on legislative history. He draws special attention to the extent to which interested parties recite on the House and Senate floors, for inclusion in the *Congressional Record*, interpretations whose sole purpose is not to promote passage of a given bill but to influence court decisions as to the meaning of the bill once it has been enacted.

Buckley closes his memoir by repeating that his life has been substantially unplanned. This is so, but it is so also, as the text reveals, that recurrently in life he has thought his way through alternatives. These often involved the appeal of principle, and the lure of power. When he became a senior judge ten years ago, a poll was conducted by *Washingtonian* magazine. It was astonishing, but hugely gratifying. Buckley was described as the finest member of the court in the judgment of his peers. That achievement was utterly unplanned, to use Buckley's language, but wonderfully rewarding, as is this idiomatic, charming, informative account of his public life. **NR**

The Too-Much-Information Age



War Made New: Technology, Warfare, and the Course of History: 1500 to Today, by Max Boot (Gotham, 640 pp., $35)

JAMES S. ROBBINS

RETROSPECTIVES on the Rumsfeld era in the Pentagon have focused on the war in Iraq and the various issues surrounding it—pre-war intelligence, weapons of mass destruction, lack of planning for the post-major-combat-operations phase, and so forth. Yet Secretary Rumsfeld's most important legacy may well turn out to be a paradigm shift in the defense establishment encapsulated in the concept of "Defense Transformation." The changes that have taken place under the "transformation" rubric will revolutionize how the United States fights wars and manages the business of national security for years to come. Its precepts are enshrined in documents such as the Quadrennial Defense Review, the National Military Strategy, and other supporting strategies, many of which are unfamiliar outside the confines of the national-security community, but which are reshaping views of threats, risks, capabilities, and objectives.

Mr. Robbins is author of *Last in Their Class: Custer, Pickett, and the Goats of West Point.*

The Transformation debate has been raging for many years, in many guises: The subject was called the Military-Technical Revolution (or MTR) in the 1980s, the Revolution in Military Affairs (RMA) in the 1990s. Some say these concepts are nothing new, that the U.S. military has been in a constant state of transformation since its inception. Others believe that while some of the core transformational concepts have merit, its more fervid apostles have raised it to the level of an unquestionable dogma that has yet to deliver on its more optimistic promises. Many of the true believers speak the language of business models more fluently than that of war plans—shades of McNamara—and their terminology is reminiscent of the jargon used during the dot-com boom by young visionaries eager to usher in the virtual future. The stock-market collapse in 2000 corrected most of *that* hyper-optimism, but in the defense bureaucracy, free of the discipline of the bottom line, the quest continued.

With some exceptions, such as studies of the changes during the interwar period of 1919 to 1939, the debate over transformation has lacked deep historical context. Into the mix comes Max Boot's *War Made New: Technology, Warfare, and the Course of History: 1500 to Today*. As the title indicates, it is an ambitious undertaking, a review of five centuries of warfare as seen through the lens of twelve exemplary battles.

To look at war made new, Boot immediately takes the reader back 500 years to the French King Charles VIII's invasion ("Blitzkrieg," Boot calls it) of Italy in 1494. It is a commonly used demarcation in military history, witnessing the first large-scale, truly national European army with organic artillery capability. The French cannon brought down previously impregnable fortresses in matters of days or in some cases hours. It was the beginning of the end of the Renaissance, and Machiavelli and Guicciardini both saw it as the finish of Italian independence. Charles's invasion demonstrated the superiority of national armies over mercenaries—called by the Italians "condottieri," which literally means

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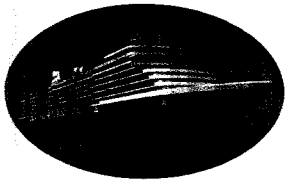

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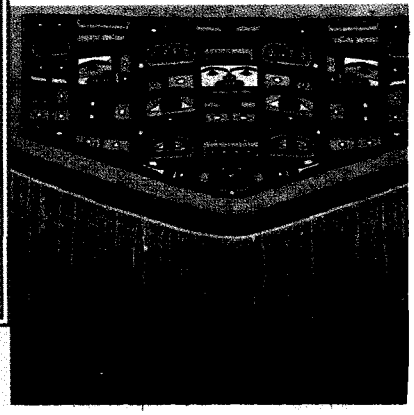

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Sun./July 29	Seattle		4:00PM	evening cocktail reception
Mon./July 30	AT SEA			morning/afternoon seminars
Tues./July 31	Glacier Bay	10:00AM	4:00PM	morning seminar late-night poolside smoker
Wed./Aug. 1	Juneau, AK	7:00AM	8:00PM	evening cocktail reception
Thur./Aug. 2	Sitka, AK	8:00AM	5:00PM	late-night poolside smoker
Fri./Aug. 3	Ketchikan, AK	7:00AM	1:00PM	afternoon seminars evening cocktail reception
Sat./Aug. 4	Victoria, B.C.	6:00PM	Midnight	morning seminar afternoon seminar
Sun./Aug. 5	Seattle	7:00AM		

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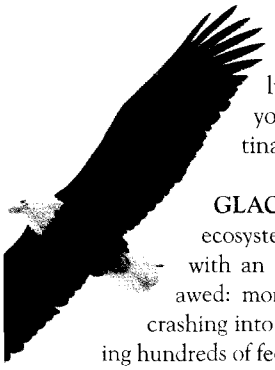

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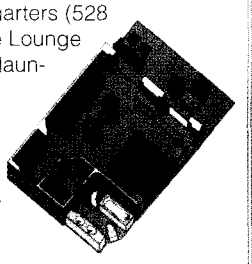

DELUXE SUITE Magnificent luxury quarters (528 sq. ft.) features use of exclusive Neptune Lounge and personal concierge, complimentary laundry, pressing and dry-cleaning service. Large private verandah, king-size bed (convertible to 2 twins), whirlpool bath/shower, dressing room, large sitting area, DVD, mini-bar, and refrigerator.

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DOUBLE OCCUPANCY RATE: $ 5,479 P/P
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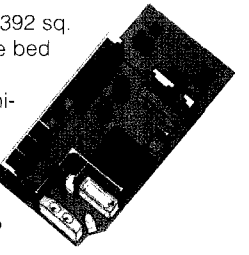

SUPERIOR SUITE Grand stateroom (392 sq. ft.) features private verandah, queen-size bed (convertible to 2 twin beds), whirlpool bath/shower, large sitting area, DVD, mini-bar, refrigerator, floor-to-ceiling windows, and much more.

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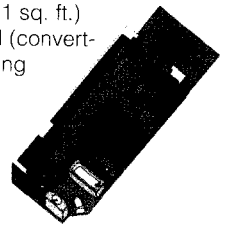

DELUXE OUTSIDE Spacious cabin (241 sq. ft.) features private verandah, queen-size bed (convertible to 2 twin beds), bath with shower, sitting area, mini-bar, tv, refrigerator, and floor-to-ceiling windows.

Categories VA / VB / VC
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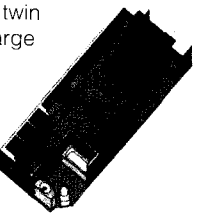

LARGE OCEAN VIEW Comfortable quarters (190 sq. ft.) features queen-size bed (convertible to 2 twin beds), bathtub with shower, sitting area, tv, large ocean-view windows.

Category D
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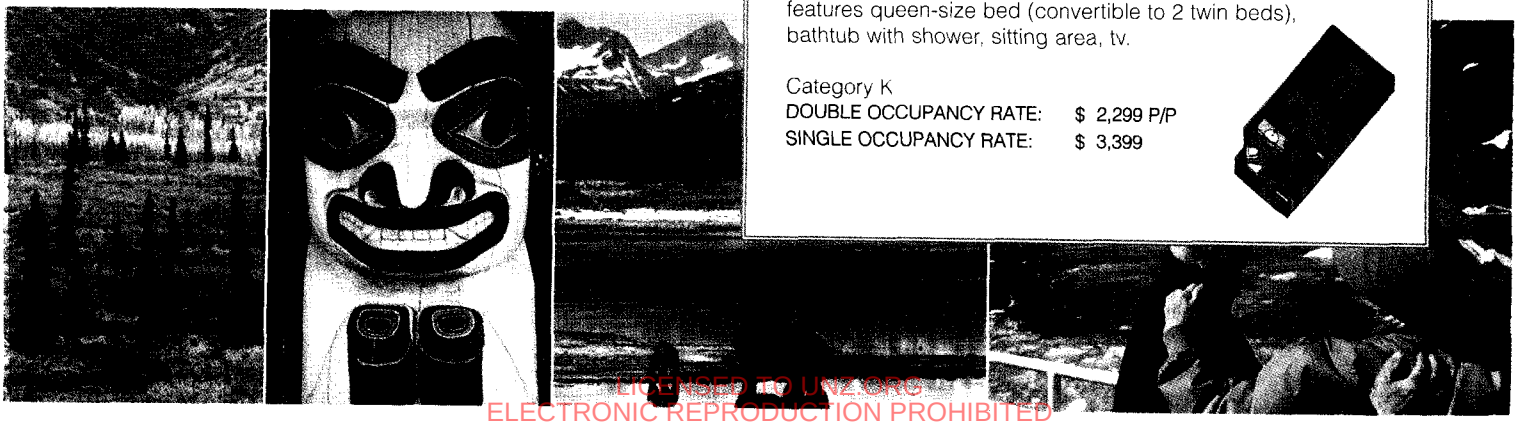
SINGLE OCCUPANCY RATE: $ 4,199

LARGE INSIDE Cozy but ample cabin quarters (185 sq. ft.) features queen-size bed (convertible to 2 twin beds), bathtub with shower, sitting area, tv.

Category K
DOUBLE OCCUPANCY RATE: $ 2,299 P/P
SINGLE OCCUPANCY RATE: $ 3,399



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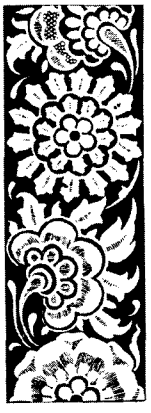
"contractors." Ironically, today's defense transformers seek to outsource every possible military specialization.

The twelve battles examined in *War Made New* are grouped in threes under each of four "revolutions"—the gunpowder, first and second industrial, and information revolutions. Throughout the book Boot explores five interconnected themes: that advanced technology alone does not confer victory; that innovative countries tend to be winners; that countries must know their limits; that even victorious countries cannot rest forever on their laurels; and that the pace of innovation is accelerating.

Though using battles as illustrative touchstones, each chapter reviews the key events and developments leading up to the contest in question. For example, the chapter dealing with the March 9–10, 1945, firebombing of Tokyo is primarily a review of the development of strategic-bombing concepts and technology in the decades preceding World War II. The narrative of the bombing itself is brief yet gripping. The low-altitude bomber crews reported smelling burning human flesh; 16.8 square miles of Tokyo were destroyed in that single raid, and around 100,000 people died. By way of comparison with the 9/11 attack, imagine a line from Ground Zero going north to about 135th street. Flatten every building in a mile-wide swath on each side of that line, and you get the general idea.



Beyond the specifics of the raid, one learns that the "systems approach" to war fighting so beloved of the transformation thinkers is hardly new—it had been the dominant paradigm in the air services since at least the 1930s. Victory in World War II went to the best-organized bureaucracies: startlingly, not the Germans or the Japanese, whose industrial plans and war-mobilization efforts were surprisingly inefficient and unsystematic. (To be fair, a point the author does not make is that in this case our homeland was secure, which tended to give the U.S. an advantage over enemies whose factories were bombed and whose supply ships were sunk daily.)

One also learns of the tendency toward technophilia among the transformation apostles—hotly denied, but evident in the fascination with cutting-edge gadgets. The U.S. has always prided itself on its technological innovations, but many forget that America was behind the curve in most respects at the onset of World War II. Our tanks in particular were substandard compared with Europeans'. As well, the Germans in 1940 faced French and British forces that not only had better arms and equipment in most cases, but more of them. Yet the outnumbered Germans were able to conquer France in six weeks owing to a combination of doctrine, campaign coordination, deception, and, frankly, luck. The takeaway is that there is a great deal more to defense transformation than just having the latest wonder weapon.

Boot provides a sweeping, accessible narrative. Most of the chapters contain information that should be familiar to anyone versed in military history. The exemplary battles are a mix of the famous and the not-so (e.g., the 1803 battle of Assaye, between Indian Mahratta warriors and British regulars—the latter led by Maj.-Gen. the Hon. Arthur Wellesley, later Duke of Wellington). The most familiar will be the "information age" conflicts of the past 15 years. One can quibble with Boot's choice of battles and wars, but there is enough dogmatism in the transformation debate as it is. Rather, one should, as Boot does, approach the topic with a measure of humility. The book was not intended to be a compilation of the twelve "most significant" battles, but rather those most illustrative for the author's purposes. The analytical sections are the strongest, in which the themes are drawn out and lessons applied. The concluding portion discusses possible futures, with all the caveats appropriate to such a discussion.

It is unfortunate that the book focuses on major combat operations. This is not to say that the U.S. will never again fight conventional wars; but the spirit of the age leans toward encounters with guerrillas, terrorists, and other irregular forces. Such groups cannot defeat our armed forces, nor can they bring down our country; but they can have a major impact on the unconventional battlefield. The conflict in Iraq demonstrates that all the network centricity in the world will not guarantee success. Likewise with a possible future conflict with Iran. The U.S. has the strongest military and the largest economy in history. U.S. defense spending is around two-thirds the aggregate spent on defense in the entire world. We outspend Iran annually by 80 times. But how does this superiority translate into power writ large? Surely, the U.S. could defeat Iran in a head-to-head conventional military struggle. But this does not mean that we ever will fight Iran, or that we would win the peace afterward.

The problem with the debate over defense transformation is that it deals principally if not exclusively with the military instrument of national power. As recent events in Iraq have shown, this overweening focus on the "kinetic" factors can lead to serious problems. There is more to war than battles and weapons, more to it even than organization and logistics. For all the talk of transformation, revolution, and the various ages of warfare, the human factors in war are eternal and unchanging. Planning, cultural understanding, leadership, wisdom, the ability to get things done—these sometimes ineffable qualities will always be critical to success in war. The best network in the world will not prevent a decision maker from making a poor decision, but it will make certain that it is implemented with unprecedented speed and thoroughness.

A few years ago, a student of mine from the Marine Corps Command and Staff College went from Quantico to General Franks's planning staff for Operation Enduring Freedom. Some time later, I asked him if anything he had learned in school had helped him in fighting a real war. To my surprise he said that the parts of the curriculum that focused on the campaign-planning process were not the most important—these were very much by the book, and one could learn them very well by doing. What he truly valued, he said, was the unit I taught on Thucydides. He said it well prepared him for dealing with the Afghan tribal warlords, whose behavior Pericles would have understood perfectly. War can be made new, but human nature refuses to be transformed. **NR**

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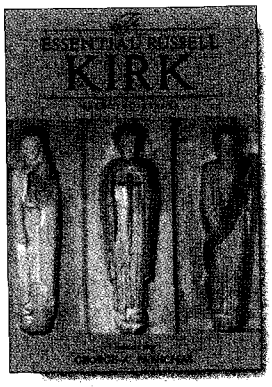
Keeping The Faith



The Essential Russell Kirk: Selected Essays,
edited by George A. Panichas
(ISI, 525 pp., $30)

JAMES E. PERSON JR.

LOOMING over the fireplace in the late Russell Kirk's library in Mecosta, Mich., are three small stone images, statues given to Kirk by the renowned Scots sculptor Hew Lorimer during the 1950s. Lorimer's images represent history, law, and theology—and they now appropriately adorn the cover of this fat book. History, law, and theology are roughly analogous to the central concerns of Kirk's thought: order, justice, and freedom. Through the study of history we learn the primacy of order. Through law, we maintain justice. And through theology—through faith in God—we find freedom that transcends circumstance.

George Panichas, longtime editor of *Modern Age: A Quarterly Review*, undertook a daunting task in compiling the present volume. How does one set about delving into Kirk's many hundreds of published works of a half-century, to select those passages that are essential? Kirk was not just an essayist but a novelist, reviewer, historian, biographer (his *Eliot and His Age* is underappreciated), and teller of ghostly tales. He contributed a regular column to NATIONAL REVIEW for half his career, during the magazine's rough-and-tumble early years. He is best known for the 1953 book *The Conservative Mind*, a landmark history of ideas tracing the lineage of Anglo-American conservatism from the time of Burke.

Kirk's works in every genre have some highly memorable recurring themes: *the permanent things*, *the moral imagination*, *the timeless moment*, *the little platoons*, *the contract of eternal society*. In *The Conservative Mind*, Kirk wrote that the conservative "is concerned, first of all, for the regeneration of spirit and character—with the perennial problem of the inner order of the soul, the restoration of the ethical understanding and the religious sanction upon which any life worth living is founded."

Kirk considered himself a traditionalist conservative—not a movement conservative, a neoconservative, a libertarian, or a fusionist. He was an advocate of small-town and agrarian culture, rather than urban culture. A world traveler, he was never happier than when at home in Mecosta, one of those blink-and-you'll-miss-it villages that dot the farm country of Michigan's Lower Peninsula, well north of Detroit. He was a conservationist who loved green spaces and planted trees throughout Mecosta County all his life.

In international matters, Kirk clung to the old vision of America as a national republic, not a wide-ranging presence for Making Things Right all over the world. (He once declared that "a soundly conservative foreign policy, in the age which is dawning, should be neither 'interventionist' nor 'isolationist': It should be prudent. Its object should not be to secure the triumph everywhere of America's name and manners, under the slogan of 'democratic capitalism,' but instead the preservation of the true national interest, and acceptance of the diversity of economic and political institutions.") With regard to American influence abroad, Kirk had little faith in the success of culture "poured in from the top," in John Crowe Ransom's memorable phrase.

Mr. Person is the author of *Russell Kirk: A Critical Biography of a Conservative Mind* and is at work on *The Quotable Kirk*.

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As a scholar, Kirk was an exhaustively well-read source of wisdom on America's traditional ideals (lengthy excerpts from his lively 1974 history *The Roots of American Order* are included in this collection, notably a chapter highlighting the signal contribution of the ancient Hebrews toward elevating our understanding of God and His ways)—yet he enjoyed nothing better than sitting down with friends, and especially young people, and telling ghost stories. In a world of buckram masks and literary phantasms, here was a *man*—to use Kirk's own assessment of Wyndham Lewis, included in this volume.

Kirk's key concepts of order, justice, and freedom permeate the book. In the introduction to his *Portable Conservative Reader* (1982), Kirk articulates the fact that conservatism is not an ideology, designed to change human nature for the better as we march toward a glowing new tomorrow, but rather a way of looking at life. Or, as Panichas summarizes it, "It is a way 'of looking at the civic social order,' and centers around basic beliefs in a transcendent order, in social continuity, in 'things established by immemorial usage,' in the virtue of prudence, in human variety, and in human imperfectability." In counterpoint to Kirk's ruminations on conservative thought, the editor has included two scathing essays on what Kirk called "Demon Ideology."

Panichas has also selected essays by Kirk on his literary and scholarly heroes, notably Eliot, Wyndham Lewis, Irving Babbitt, Paul Elmer More, the economist Wilhelm Roepke, and a good man largely forgotten today: Max Picard, author of *The Flight from God* (1934), a work that argued that in fleeing from faith in God toward secularization, modern man has placed himself in a precarious state here below, leaving himself naked before his enemies—who work relentlessly to undermine the edifice of civilization through appeals to men's passions.

Recognition of the transcendent and the claims of God upon humanity is woven throughout these essays. In one, "Can Virtue Be Taught?" Kirk notes that the very word *virtue*, today bearing connotations of sexual purity, at one time carried with it the strong suggestion of public leadership: "By the 'virtuous man,' . . . the classical writers meant a leader in statecraft and in war, one who towered above his fellow citizens, a person in whom courage, wisdom, self-restraint, and just dealing were conspicuous." Can these qualities be taught? Kirk replies that virtue can be taught by example, not through a formal program of study; and he adds, ominously: "We Americans have grown very well fed, very much starved for virtue. Nowhere is this more amply illustrated than in Washington. Whether or not virtue can be taught, we have not troubled our heads with it, nor our hearts. When the Rough Beast slouches upon us, what Theseus or Perseus, incandescent with the energy of virtue, will draw his sword?" Only, it would seem, men and women not deceived by the siren appeals of ideology.

Recognition of the transcendent and the claims of God upon humanity is woven throughout these essays.

An extraordinary essay from Kirk's last years is included here: "Criminal Character and Mercy," a discussion of capital punishment leavened by anecdotes from his reading and personal experience. In the editor's annotations—which are, throughout the book, both precise and helpfully descriptive—Panichas says Kirk demonstrates that "the subject of criminal character and mercy must be separated from abstract humanitarian presuppositions and theories that easily, if conveniently, crumble into a sentimentalism ruled by emotion and not reason." In the essay itself, Kirk writes: "Why do some people retain so extreme an aversion to capital punishment that they would deny the death penalty even to condemned murderers who desire to be executed? Because of the fear of death—the dread of the void, of annihilation. . . . It is an illogical dread, this terror of the inevitable: for we all die, just the same. . . . For all of us, in the end, death is the ultimate mercy. I do not understand why we should deny that mercy to slayers whose earthly existence is a grave; nor why we should deny a merciful protection to the guiltless whose purpose in this world may be undone by those guilty slayers."

Reading *The Essential Russell Kirk*, one is struck by how quotable Kirk can be. On revolution: "Revolution slices through the arteries of a culture, a cure that kills." The 100 million people who died under Hitler, Stalin, and Mao during the past century would agree, as would their grieving survivors. On the question of social change, which conservatives are alleged to despise: "Prudent social change is the means for renewing society's vitality, much as the human body is perpetually renewing itself, and yet retains its vitality. Without judicious change, we perish." On the modern connotation of the word *liberal*: "The modern 'liberal' world, as I have come to understand it, is making its way straight toward what C. S. Lewis calls 'the abolition of man'—toward a society devoid of reverence, variety, and the higher imagination; toward a society in which 'everybody belongs to everybody else,' in which there exists collectivism without community, equality without love."

Panichas has been faithful in reproducing the exact text of the writings, up to and including one of the few errors of fact—and it's small—found among Kirk's works. In defending his belief that truth is not crafted out of thin air by coffee-house philosophers, Kirk was fond of paraphrasing an ancient saying to the effect that "if we moderns have seen farther, it is because we are as dwarfs mounted on the shoulders of giants," and attributing this to Fulbert of Chartres. In fact, this striking imagery is more likely to have originated with the 12th-century philosopher and teacher *Bernard* of Chartres.

A helpful "Selective List" of books and articles about Kirk concludes Panichas's volume, which will well serve readers interested in learning about the remarkable man who brought a much-needed prospect of the permanent things to the conservative movement as it arose in the mid-20th century. Long respected as an authority on D. H. Lawrence, Simone Weil, and Joseph Conrad, Panichas cements his reputation as a preeminent authority on Russell Kirk with this well-chosen selection. **NR**

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■ FILM ■

The Book Is Better

ROSS DOUTHAT

It's easy for a good movie to color subsequent readings of the book it's based on. Literature is a subtle, fragile medium, more complex than cinema but also easily overwhelmed by what gets summoned up on screen. It's hard to re-read even so powerful a story as J. R. R. Tolkien's *Lord of the Rings* without Peter Jackson's Middle-earth crowding into the mind's eye, shunting the imagination aside. Pick up Raymond Chandler's *The Big Sleep*, and you're likely to picture Humphrey Bogart filling Philip Marlowe's suit; re-read *The Prime of Miss Jean Brodie*, and you'll probably hear Maggie Smith's brogue trilling the title character's every line of dialogue.

Sometimes, though, it works the other way: A great book can spoil a good film adaptation, by setting the bar so high that mere artistic success is insufficient, and the viewer spends the film regretting the places where the novelist's genius outshines the director's vision. That's the case with *Children of Men*, Alfonso Cuarón's adaptation of P. D. James's dystopian novel—it's an impressive movie, touched by flashes of inspiration, but it's best seen, and judged, by an audience that hasn't yet read the book.

Like James's novel, the movie takes place in a near-future world in which the entire population has been rendered infertile, and humanity is a couple of decades deep into its final four score and ten. The setting is Great Britain, the last outpost of order in a globe gone to bedlam. Or quasi-order, at least: There's a fascistic government bent on rounding up illegal immigrants, advertisements for suicide pills on television, and bands of flagellants on the streets of London. Our guide through this chaos is a brooding Clive Owen, lending his usual bitter charm to the role of Theo Faron, once a political activist and now a hard-drinking functionary in the Ministry of Energy. He slouches unmoved through a decaying landscape that's part 1990s Sarajevo and part *Blade Runner*, and the camera prowls around him—curious and appalled where he has gone numb, lingering over scenes of misery (bombs, sobbing women, rock-throwing vagrants) that he allows to wash off his back.

This routinized despair is interrupted soon enough, of course, when Owen's Theo is kidnapped—by his ex-wife, it turns out, now the head of a radical group known as the Fishes, who are bent on overthrowing the government, saving the immigrants from their miserable refugee camps, and restoring equality before the law. Or something like that: Theo's ex, played by Julianne Moore, is clearly on the side of the angels, but the rest of her merry band offer a cautionary lesson in the perils of idealism run amok. This is a movie with a tedious anti-Bush message woven in: The government's immigrant roundups take place under the aegis of "Homeland Security," and there are obvious nods to Fallujah, Guantanamo, and Abu Ghraib. But Cuarón is savvy enough to complicate his story's politics, to paint the rebels in shades of gray and even black, and to choose a "plague on both your houses" approach to his dystopia over an easy left-wing Manichaeism.

Besides, *Children of Men* isn't really interested in scoring political points—it's a chase movie, with global infertility as the MacGuffin that sets in motion Theo's flight across England to the sea, as the guardian of a young black immigrant who is mysteriously, miraculously, pregnant. Their goal is to escape England on a ship from the Human Project, a semi-mythical group of do-gooders with whom the Fishes are in contact. It's a journey that requires a harrowing descent into a refugee-camp hell, where government troops fight chanting Muslims under an eldritch sky, and then a rowboat ride into a foggy, oceanic unknown. Along the way, the child is born, to be carried bawling through a world of blood and ash, toward an uncertain salvation—for itself, and all the world.

The whole thing is bravura filmmaking—there are extended takes that will leave you breathless; gripping, layered performances from Owen and Michael Caine (sporting long hair and a pot-fueled twinkle as Theo's hippie friend and mentor); and strong supporting turns from Moore and the ever-excellent Chiwetel Ejiofor, who would be on his way to stardom if anyone could pronounce his name. (Clare-Hope Ashitey doesn't really register as Kee, the pregnant girl, but the script doesn't offer her much to work with: She's an icon of hope, a foul-mouthed Mary figure, not an actual human being.) And it marks a major step forward for Cuarón, whose best movie to date had been *Harry Potter and the Prisoner of Azkaban*, where his flair for cinematic composition was tethered to J. K. Rowling's imagination and the expectations of millions of fans. Otherwise, he has gravitated toward stories that are lovely but ultimately vacuous—like *Y tu mamá también*, which was subtitled and foreign and fooled critics into overpraising it, or *Great Expectations*, which was in English, starred Ethan Hawke, and received the pans that it deserved. With *Children of Men*, though, he's put his talents in the service of a vision that's original, memorable, and moving, and whose themes of political despair and procreative failure should touch a nerve in anyone concerned about Western civilization's current prospects.

So long, that is, as the "anyone" in question hasn't read the book. If they have, they'll feel like a playgoer promised *Hamlet* and presented instead with an above-average murder mystery about a troubled son hunting down his father's killer: It's good so far as it goes, but it's a shadow of something greater. James's novel, which has the same outline as the movie but radically different details, makes Cuarón's film look cautious and conventional by comparison—its spiritual themes shallow and PC, its characterizations thin and predictable, its attempts at political complexity naïve. This is a testament to literature's advantages, in a way, but it's also a sign of the perils of trying too hard to make something great your own. You can pilfer selectively from your source material and fashion something gripping out of it, but you're better off if nobody knows what you left behind. Which is why those coming fresh to *Children of Men* are better off seeing Cuarón's adaptation first, and only then turning to the greater pleasures, and challenges, of the story that the movie decided not to tell. **NR**

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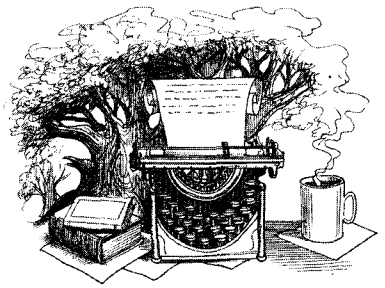
■ COUNTRY LIFE ■

Rebels on The Hudson



RICHARD BROOKHISER

I WAS pumping gas when in behind me pulled a pickup. Big, high built, lots of chrome. Volunteer fireman's plate on the front bumper. As I went into the PX to pay, I got a look at the back bumper: various stickerage, including a Confederate battle flag.

Now the pickup wasn't passing through, because it had New York plates, and the sticker wasn't a pure fluke, because I've seen other battle flags in the area. If this were the Old South, or a border state, or even the border of a border state, like my wife's hometown, Cincinnati (which has a big Kentucky diaspora), then the battle flag would be one thing: a regional connection, perhaps familial. It could be a connection to Robert E. Lee, or to the first Klan, but it would be one kind of connection: I live here, it flew here, my people flew it, so do I.

Where I live it has to be something else. I am a noticer of cemeteries, especially small, forgotten, forlorn ones: family plots, cemeteries of towns that have vanished, cemeteries from colonial times (Dutch colonial times). There are four within ten minutes of my house. One is still taking customers; another is a handful of crooked gravestones like busted teeth in a bum's mouth. You could look a long time in the cemeteries of the eastern Catskills and not find a veteran of the Army of Northern Virginia. You might well find veterans of the 120th New York Volunteers. Recruited from Ulster and Greene counties, they served from Fredericksburg to Appomattox. Their worst day was July 2, 1863, Day 2 of Gettysburg, when they sustained 203 casualties out of 383 engaged. So why would people in the neighborhood fly the flag of the people who killed their long-lost neighbors, and whom their long-lost neighbors killed? I thought of eight possible reasons.

Agreement. "The prevailing ideas entertained by [Thomas Jefferson] and most of the leading statesmen at the time of the formation of the old constitution, were that the enslavement of the African was in violation of the laws of nature; that it was wrong in *principle*, socially, morally, and politically. . . . Our new government is founded upon exactly the opposite idea; its foundations are laid, its corner-stone rests upon the great truth, that the negro is not equal to the white man; that slavery—subordination to the superior race—is his natural and normal condition."—Alexander Stephens, Vice President, Confederate States of America, Savannah, Ga., March 21, 1861. The published text notes that this paragraph was greeted with "Applause." One hopes this is not the reason.

Agreement with James Webb. Just kidding, senator. You're a great writer, you know what you mean.

Admiring Bob Dylan. Dylan fans have been in a flutter since one of them discovered that several phrases on his latest album, *Modern Times*, were adapted from the poems of Henry Timrod (1828–67), a.k.a. the "poet laureate of the Confederacy." We know from the first volume of Dylan's memoirs, *Chronicles*, that when he came to Greenwich Village among his miscellaneous reading was a biography of Thaddeus Stevens, the anti-slavery firebrand. Dylan admired Stevens's uncompromising rhetoric. "Stevens had a grim sense of humor, a sharp tongue and a white-hot hatred. . . . [He] could have stepped out of a folk ballad." Now Dylan probably thinks he is just completing the picture, though what he took from Timrod was romantic wallpaper, not anything white-hot.

Admiring The Band, specifically "The Night They Drove Old Dixie Down." This is a far more likely reason. You know the song, you can sing it. *Virgil Caine is the name.* . . . The Band was Dylan's back-up band for a while. The young rebels created an old young rebel as a mythic soul-mate. It was not real passion, nor borrowed passion, but real borrowed passion. N.B.: Levon Helm, who sang it, is from Arkansas, but Robbie Robertson, who wrote it, is from Toronto.

Re-enactors. What The Band did, dressing as Civil War–era rustics and inhabiting Civil War personae, thousands of weekend warriors do, re-fighting the battles of the Civil War canon. Sometimes they meet where no Civil War battle took place. A ranger at a park in central New Jersey once told me that the most dramatic near-fatality he ever dealt with was when a Civil War re-enactor at his site left part of a cleaning tool in the barrel of his rifle before firing (hence shooting an actual projectile, into another re-enactor's head). Re-enactments may be history for non-historians and drama for non-actors, but there is a lot of specialized knowledge and sartorial, even thespian, craft involved. I know from Revolutionary War re-enactors, with whom I am more familiar, that strangeness is one of the draws: None of the Indians or Brits in their re-enactments is an actual Indian or Brit, so why can't northerners become southerners, and vice versa?

The glamour of doom. Lost causes are best causes, from Masada to Culloden. You cannot question the gallantry of the defeated—they don't give press conferences. They also escape the tedium of responsibility and daily failure that accompanies victory. After Appomattox Lee retired. Grant had to answer for the Whiskey Ring.

Don't Tread on Me. The battle flag is a prickly symbol. It hauls a load of baggage, for PC commissars and critics of treason alike. Displaying it says, Yeah, so what? You wanna fight about that? (A new fight?)

Embrace the eye of the other. Maybe you think I'm a country person, a woodchuck, a redneck. Well, maybe you're right. I'll take your thought and fly it back in your face. For the same reason, perhaps, young black men spray the word *nigger* through their talk like a shower jet.

I paid my $20 in the PX, went back to my Subaru, and drove off. I'll never know what the men in the pickup were thinking. I could have asked. It never hurts to talk to anyone, right? **NR**

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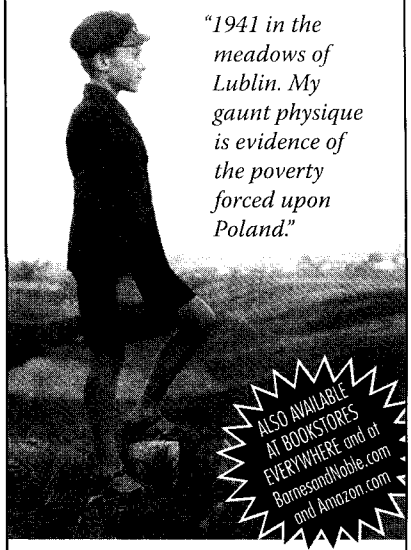

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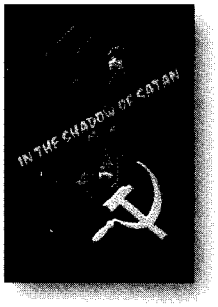

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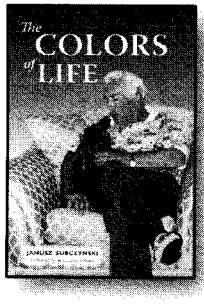

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Can Gates Succeed?

NEW YORK, DECEMBER 19

WHEN he took the oath as secretary of defense, Robert Gates was weighed down by factors he couldn't ignore, and couldn't alter. We are continuing to search for just the word that describes the U.S. mission in Iraq. But you can't do it, given American sensibilities, in the presence of the doommaker, and President Bush was the dominant figure at the ceremony.

Robert Gates minced no words on the matter of the responsibility we have in Iraq. He acknowledged the final objective, which is "to find a way to bring America's sons and daughters home again." But that will happen the day after tomorrow. What happens tomorrow is a continuation of the struggle, because "failure in Iraq at this juncture would be a calamity that would haunt our nation, impair our credibility, and endanger Americans for decades to come."

What can Mr. Gates mean when he speaks of failure "at this juncture"? The same day he spoke, the Pentagon reported that attacks against American and Iraqi targets had surged to their highest level recorded so far. The insurgents punctuated their mission by reducing electricity in Baghdad to dangerously low levels. "Now Baghdad is almost isolated," said Karim Wahid, the Iraqi electricity minister. "We almost don't have any power coming from outside." If we proceed with a surge in American manpower, is it expected that fresh troops will bring their own electricity?

The American public hasn't been informed on the matter of whether we will send reinforcements to Baghdad. One element in the decision whether to do so will surely be the fact that there aren't millions of young men and women pounding at the recruiting offices' doors asking to be sent over to do duty in Iraq. Exchanges of opinion on the matter of an increase in manpower in Iraq express the ambivalence of the high command. President Bush has said that he doesn't want to be rushed into a decision on extra troops. So what is he waiting on?

Mr. Gates has said that he will personally visit Iraq in the days to come, but this assurance brings no confidence. Personal visits to the scene don't have the magical effect that once upon a time they did. Candidate Dwight Eisenhower promised, in 1952, that if elected president he would personally visit Korea. He did so, and the war eased up. But there were other contingent developments (Stalin died), and there is nothing to assure Secretary Gates that a visit to the war front will bring fresh illumination.

It must have been especially taxing on Gates to find perspectives that would permit him to speak in the presence of a commander in chief who has to accept responsibility for the apocalyptic edge in the words spoken. If "failure" in Iraq is conceivable, or even predictable, then responsibility for that failure lies with the same commander in chief under whom Robert Gates will now be serving.

Words used by Mr. Gates and by President Bush make it plain that the ceremony, the installation of a new secretary of defense, was political in nature. Same president, same insurgency in Iraq, new secretary of defense, New York, New Haven, and Hartford, as the old comedy line used to interpose. But the challenge was squarely put—to the American people. And what will certainly be new, and will soon be evident, is the attitude of the new Congress. Will it find the means to reformulate our policy in the Middle East, in such a way as to avoid calamity and restore national credibility?

Spare Thoughts on Saddam

NEW YORK, DECEMBER 28

MANY data, historical and analytical, are being thrust at us, following the pronouncement of the death sentence on Saddam Hussein. What one might loosely call "the prosecution," anxious to defend this mite of justice handed down by the Iraqi court, reminds the world that it is incorrect to assume that the execution of Saddam can measure up to what Saddam did. Remember, we are told, the court ruled on only a single barbarity, namely the Dujail massacre.

That involved murdering about 150 Shiites. They were being punished for conspiring against Saddam. Most of them were, simply, shot. But not all. Some, we learned, were inserted into meat grinders. If the trial revealed what were Saddam's motives in this alternative means of execution, word of what they were has not got out. Most would think it naïve even to ask. The idea—alternative means of execution—wasn't a scientific experiment: Execution by bullet, or by giant blades that tear bone and flesh apart—which is better? The idea, manifestly, was to exhibit the lengths to which Saddam was routinely prepared to go in order to discourage dissent.

We are reminded that there is no mathematically satisfying way to measure the life of Saddam up against all the lives he destroyed. As well suggest that an execution of Hitler or Stalin or Mao could ever have balanced the scales on what they had done. Capital punishment is exacted, in modern law, as punishment for taking a single life. Taking hundreds, thousands, millions of lives mocks the very idea of executable justice. But the symbol of Saddam on the gallows is a symbol of justice pursued, even if plenary satisfaction is not possible.

The date is not set, but we are advised that under Iraqi law, execution is required to take place not more than 30 days after the affirmation of the sentence. And so we pause to anticipate the cries against capital punishment. Thoughtful citizens, especially those dutifully inclined to listen to the teachings of the Christian church, acknowledge that to endorse the sentence on Saddam is to endorse the capital punishment decried by a very large school of ethicists and, indeed, by the pope himself.

Let's go ahead and acknowledge that taking a life, even under civil sanction, asserts an authority over human life not lightly assumed. In the arguments of the abolitionists—and that includes most Western governments and 110 percent of

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the world's professional ethicists—this is never justifiably done in cold blood.

A formal philosophical-moral manifesto, seeking to annul the authority of the Iraqi court, has not yet been enunciated, but it will be. So far we have only the meanderings of Ramsey Clark, routinely dismissed. In plain fact, only the U.S. Army could exercise the power to freeze Saddam's trap door, and this isn't going to happen.

What is going to happen is an outcry against capital punishment, and we are obliged to listen to what will be said and to weigh the arguments, even if we have wrestled with the dilemma before. But we are entitled, also, to satisfaction from what is about to happen.

For all that the Arab world seems crowded with young men who are prepared to blow themselves up provided they can simultaneously blow up other people, the indications are pretty clear that Saddam himself has no appetite to go to the gallows. His aggressive, contemptuous conduct during the trial, the scorn he has shown for the very idea of a tribunal that presumes to question his sacrosanct judgments, balances ironically with his claims to innocence. I didn't do it, and if I did I was entitled to do it.

But this is the point at which we are entitled to a measure of satisfaction precisely over what Saddam is going to experience. Even if it is prideful to take his life, it is something other than sinful to take satisfaction—pleasure, even—at its forfeit.

It was rumored, in 1946, that the hangman in Nuremberg adjusted the nooses of some of the condemned to magnify the pain of suffocation. Such sadism was not called for then and is not called for now. But if fornication is wrong, there is no denying that it can bring pleasure. The death of Saddam Hussein at rope's end brings a pleasure that is undeniable, and absolutely chaste in its provenance.

Bury Him Good

NEW YORK, JANUARY 2

We haven't yet had, in the West, a crystallization of opinion on the matter of a) what can be shown on TV news, or b) what the public should be allowed to see via other media. Divisions on these questions were very clear following the execution of Saddam Hussein.

There was some confusion traceable to eclectic authority. Saddam was physically imprisoned under the jurisdiction of the U.S. Army, but he was tried by an Iraqi court, in a courtroom made possible by U.S. caretakers.

When the time for the end came, the U.S. delivered Saddam to the execution site, which was under overall U.S. control. But he was delivered into the hands of Iraqi judges and executioners. Here the question of authority got confused. The United States, as a general proposition, does not permit moving pictures of death scenes. Sometimes these are taken for the record, but not for public exhibition. Some of the photos taken of the medical proceedings after the shooting of President Kennedy have not yet been released. The delicate question has to do with prurience. Do we wish to make possible the gratification of that sense, quite overt in some people (e.g., the tricoteuses during the French Revolution who went early to make certain to get seats for the morning's decapitations)?

There is, then, a class of people who would keep their eyes open even if they knew that what was coming up on the screen was the neck-breaking of Saddam Hussein. At the opposite end of the scale are those who so deplore the spectacle that they are willing to pass laws criminalizing the exhibition, and here and there have succeeded in doing so.

We run into a conflict in priorities. There are always those who believe that there should be no censorship of any public event. People who hold to that view were supported for a very long time by moralists who believed that public exposure of the wages of sin would diminish the incidence of sin. The anomaly was famously exposed when, in Great Britain, capital-punishment abolitionists drove home the point that hanging ten-year-olds for stealing something worth sixpence had no apparent effect on the frequency of larceny. Gradually, capital punishment was moved to behind closed doors, though right up to the eve of World War II, beheadings in France were done publicly.

The ambivalence is heightened by the aggressive growth in the technology that tends to reveal all. It may be that the journalistic infrastructure aims less at revelation in the spirit of free speech than at satisfying appetites which we would like to think civilization would succeed in frustrating. But there it is: In a matter of hours, one would learn that tuning in to any of a half dozen websites would yield very nearly a clinically complete version of what happened to Saddam in the two minutes after the noose was strung about his neck. It is technically possible to screen everyone admitted to a death chamber in order to locate cameras, but as we have vividly seen over the weekend, even when such cameras are prohibited, the likelihood that they will be kept from the scene is slight.

So that we face again the question we faced for so many years awaiting the consolidation of the taboo: What are we going to do now? And to what extent is U.S. resolve in the matter the decisive factor?

Perhaps the public question will simply yield to practical imperatives. We are not going to instruct the nations of the Mideast in our protocols about viewing executions. To begin with, we aren't even going to instruct them on whether capital punishment will be tolerated. Public pressures tend to dictate the answers to major questions, as when the government of Israel made an exception for Nazis when constructing its law against capital punishment, so that there was no impediment, a few years down the line, to Israel's hanging of Adolf Eichmann. We have many problems in Iraq, to which we would not wish to add a regulation forbidding the execution of tyrants. An obeisance of sorts was paid to the old tradition by the major networks. They simply didn't film the neck-breaking. They looked to one side, and probably saw it at home.

—UNIVERSAL PRESS SYNDICATE

"This sounds an awful lot like nation-building. . . ."

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happy warrior

MARK STEYN

Look to the Wider War

THE *New York Sun*'s Eli Lake had an interesting story the other day about various Iranian documents recently found in Iraq. According to a U.S. intelligence official, the cache confirms that "Iran is working closely with both the Shiite militias and Sunni Jihadist groups."

Got that? In Iraq's alleged Sunni–Shiite "civil war," Iran has checked the both-of-the-above box.

On the face of it, that doesn't make a lot of sense—if, by "sense," you mean the wise old foreign-policy "realism" of the Iraq Study Group types. You may recall that Messrs. Baker, Hamilton & Co. assured us that Iran had an "interest in avoiding chaos in Iraq." Apparently, Iran feels differently.

And what they're doing suggests a clearer-headed view of the situation than the unreal realpolitik crowd in Washington can muster. Why would Shiite Iran support Sunni Iraqis who kill Shiite Iraqis?

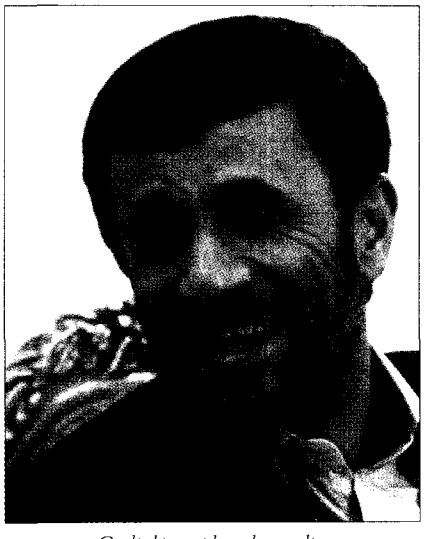
Because Iraq is not about Iraq. It's about America.

The mullahs get that, even if the entire Democratic party and half the Republicans don't. It's in Iran's interest for the U.S. adventure in Mesopotamia to end in a failure so chastening, if not traumatizing, that Washington withdraws from the region. So to that end they have arranged a proxy war.

Once upon a time, every itsy-bitsy dustup on the planet was a proxy war: The Soviets had their guy in North Wackistan, and the West had its guy in South Wackistan, and they went at it and one of them came out on top. But since the Cold War, we seem to have lost the knack of picking sides in proxy wars, so the Iranians saved us the trouble and picked both sides.

For three years, the naysayers kept assuring us there was a "civil war" in Iraq, and the Iraqis kept declining to show up for it. Then the Iranians decided to get serious about it, and to them it doesn't matter a whole lot whether Shiite Iraqis kill Sunni Iraqis or vice versa. Indeed, a straightforward "civil war" in Iraq would be over very quickly: There aren't a lot of Sunnis, and the Shiites could deal with them swiftly and nastily. Hence, Tehran's admirably bipartisan approach.

Iran appreciates what fewer and fewer Washington panjandrums grasp—that Iraq is but one front in a broader conflict. These days we spend an inordinate amount of time obsessing on micro-



Credit him with understanding

features of the Iraqi internal scene—the merits of this or that party over this or that militia, how such and such a parliamentarian brings leverage to bear on such and such a cleric. We ought to understand, as the Iranians do, that our strategy in Iraq has to advance our objectives in the wider war. So, for example, increasing troop numbers will be a waste of time if Washington, in effect, falls for the role in which the Iranians have cast it—the third party stuck in the middle of an unending sectarian struggle. You might stabilize Baghdad, but not for long. Increasing troop numbers would be useful only if it advanced our broader interests.

Colin Powell famously framed his advice on Iraq in Pottery Barn terms: You break it, you own it. But, as I point out in *America Alone*, after the fall of Saddam our enemies concluded the opposite: We didn't have the guts to break it; therefore, we didn't own it. In being willing to supply Sunni terror groups with the wherewithal to bomb Shiite mosques, Iran is demonstrating it does have the guts to break it—and may well end up owning it.

America, of course, cannot really "break" Iraq: It fights with one hand tied behind its back, constrained not only by the U.N., the media, et al., but by its sense of itself as a civilized democracy. Therefore, any troop surge in the cause of a defensive policing operation will by definition be transitory. You cannot break this enemy fighting his stooges in Baghdad and Anbar.

At the risk of spending the whole column quoting myself, here's another reprise. In the summer of 2002, Amr Moussa, secretary-general of the Arab League, warned BBC listeners that a U.S. invasion would "threaten the whole stability of the Middle East." I wrote: "He's missing the point: *That's* the reason it's such a great idea." Invading Iraq made sense because it offered the best way to prick the puffed-up pustule of regional stability. We seem to have forgotten that. The Iranians haven't. They're at war with us, but they reserve the right to pick the kind of war that suits them. Tank battles, naval bombardments, air strikes would be a disaster for them: That kind of war they'd lose very quickly. But asymmetrical insurgency suits them just fine: That kind of war grinds down the superpower.

I'm not advocating instant bombardments of Tehran. But Iran has plenty of proxies: Some are strong, some aren't. Syria is a weak proxy that nevertheless has been allowed to subvert post-Saddam Iraq for almost four years. The argument made by George W. Bush—we're fighting them over there so we don't have to fight them here—is a good one: It's always better to wage war on foreign soil. But, psychologically, in the eyes of the world, Iraq for the moment isn't "foreign" soil: It's ours. So the administration should follow its catchphrase to its logical conclusion: Let's fight on the offense on enemy turf, so we don't have to play defense on ours.

If Iran can arrange both sides of a "civil war" on our side of the border, why can't we cause some trouble on theirs? **NR**

MORTEZA NIKOUBAZL/REUTERS

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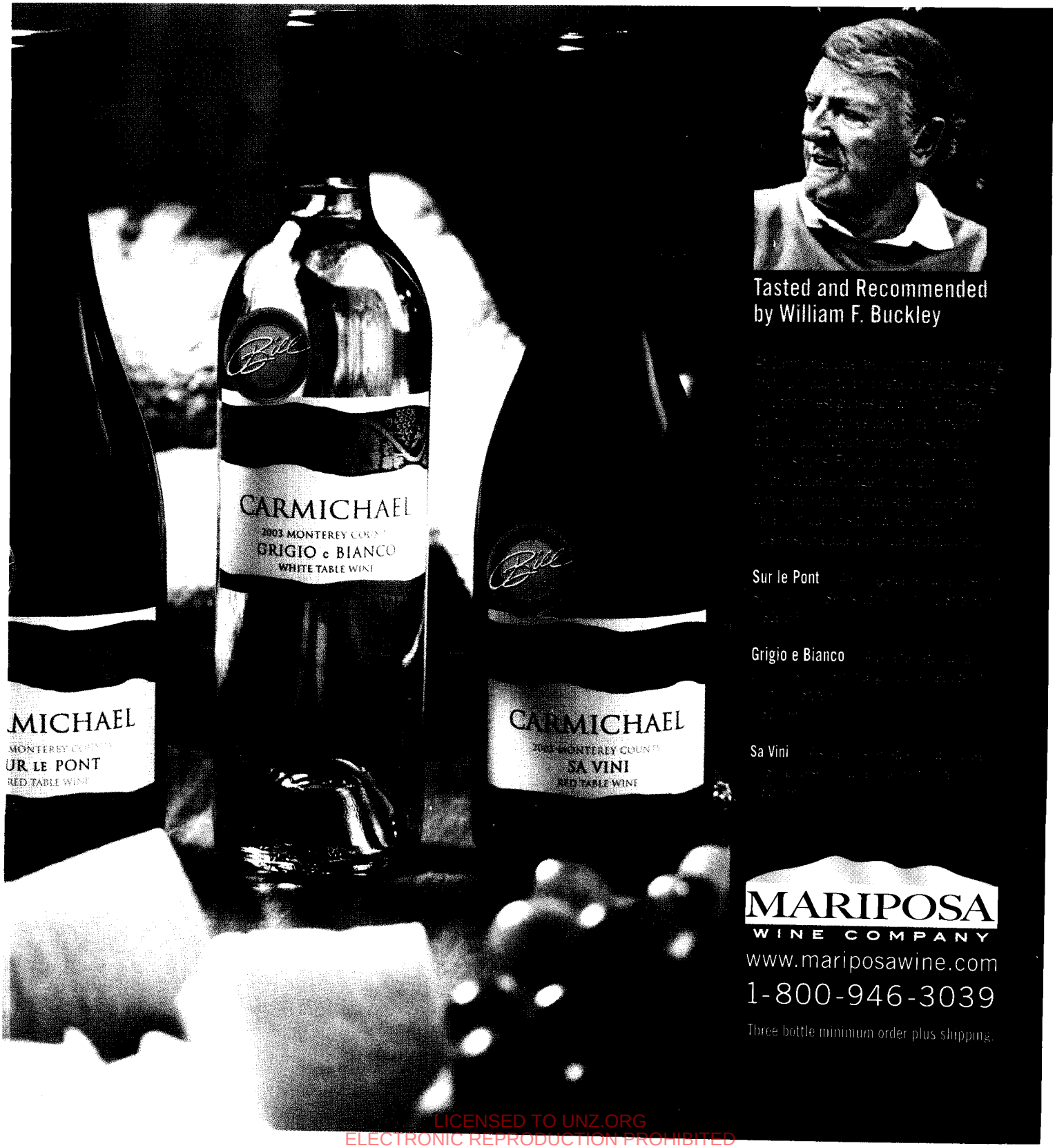

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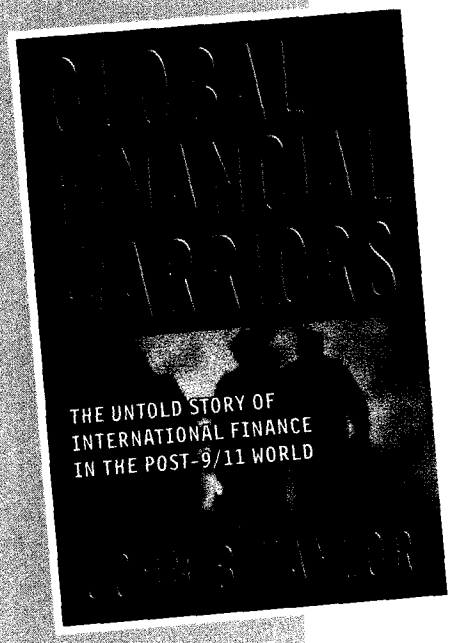

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John B. Taylor *was Treasury Under Secretary for international affairs from 2001 to 2005. A senior fellow at the Hoover Institution at Stanford University, he is also the Mary and Robert Raymond Professor of Economics at Stanford.*

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